ROBERT W. WOODRUFF LIBRARY

EMILY
AND
ERNEST
WOODRUFF
ENDOWMENT
FUND

EMORY UNIVERSITY
1836 1915

FAIRLY WON;

OR,

THE HEIRESS OF ENDERLEIGH.

A Story.

BY

H. S. E.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.
1871.

[*All Rights Reserved.*]

PRINTED BY TAYLOR AND CO.,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

FAIRLY WON;

OR,

THE HEIRESS OF ENDERLEIGH.

CHAPTER I.

"MAY I trouble you?" said a lady as, upon rising from her seat at a crowded *table d'hôte*, she made the discovery that part of her dress was held fast by the leg of her neighbour's chair.

"I *beg* your pardon," exclaimed the neighbour, instantly starting up and releasing it.

"Thank you."

The scene was the dining room of the Hôtel de Bellevue, at Bonn, on the Rhine; the speakers were an English lady and an English gentleman.

And when I say a lady and gentleman, I mean what I say. They were such in reality, and not merely by courtesy. There was no mistaking the tone of Miss Vivian's voice, or the gentle dignity of her manner, for other than those of a perfect gentlewoman; whilst, on the other hand, there was something in the quiet self-possession with which her neighbour excused himself for his unintentional awkwardness, equally removed from either indifference or *empressement*, which as clearly showed him to be a high bred gentleman, as the unbroken silence he had hitherto maintained had declared him to be an Englishman.

Do not let me be for a moment understood to mean, that I consider the silence of the Englishman to be a proof of the high breeding of the gentleman. Far from it. On the contrary, I hold that the stern panoply of reserve in which our countrymen are so often pleased to wrap themselves, when in the presence of strangers (and especially when travelling on the continent), savours too much of the ignoble doctrine, that one should hold every man to be an enemy until one knows him to be a friend, and argues not well either for their worldly wisdom or their Christian charity. Still, there are times when a fit of innate shyness or preoccupation of thought naturally indisposes a man from starting a conversation on common-place subjects with a person he has never seen before, and whom he may in all probability never see again. And each of these excuses might on this occasion have been fairly urged on behalf of the gentleman had been seated by Miss Vivian's side, and who was not in general wont to be either taciturn or uncourteous.

But if his lips had been silent, his eyes, at least, had not been idle during the apparently interminable German dinner, which, to use an Americanism, they were just "through." More than once he had contrived to obtain stolen glances of admiration at his fair countrywoman seated to his right; but when in the brief colloquy which I have recorded, they stood for one moment opposite to each other, he felt that, if he lived to be an old man, nothing would ever quite efface from his memory the picture of that most beautiful English face.

Certainly it *was* a lovely face, one to be remembered years afterwards in dreams perhaps. Shall I try to describe it? Vain as the effort is almost sure to prove, I must yet endeavour to tell something of Edith Vivian's beauty.

Her features were of that high order of Grecian beauty so seldom seen, and which, when seen, often disappoint at first all but an artist's eye. They seem too pure, too perfect; fitted rather for the statue or the picture than for every-day life and home associations. The low broad forehead, the straight nose, with its delicate arched nostrils; the short upper lip which seems so instinctively to curl into an expression of scorn; these at first sight often repel rather than attract, perhaps because they create in the minds of many a feeling of disappointment, at finding the type of strictly classical beauty less winning in reality than it had been in imagination. But in Miss Vivian's case the severity of the features was relieved by the peculiar charm of the expression. Some persons called her cold and haughty, and there were times certainly when she was silent, and with strangers, when she *could* look as if "all the blood of all the Howards" was flowing in her veins; but when she spoke, or if she only smiled, and she was one of those few persons who smile with the eyes as well as with the lips, all the pride and hauteur of her manner vanished at once. Those who had once seen it seldom forgot the rare loveliness of Edith Vivian's smile.

Her complexion was clear, but very pale; always pale, except when some feeling of impulse or excitement would send the rich colour in an instant flushing to her cheek. The small head so gracefully set upon the shoulders, seemed almost crushed by the weight of brown hair, which was drawn back simply from the temples, and rolled into a thick coil at the back of her head. But after all, it was in her eyes that her chief beauty lay. They were dark, but not black; soft and full rather than sparkling. In looking at them, one was tempted to think of the old child's rhyme, for something there was about them of—

> "Les yeux si noirs,
> Which say so fiercely,
> I *will* make war."

but more, far more, did they remind you of—

> "Eyes so blue,
> Qui disent tout doucement,
> I will love *you*."

Miss Vivian's costume was very simple—a travelling dress of some dark material, but fitting perfectly as a riding-habit, and showing to full advantage the graceful symmetry of her figure. A Roman cameo, which was a perfect gem in its way, and two curiously wrought bracelets, were the only ornaments she wore, but they served to show that the simplicity was not of necessity, but of choice.

I say just so much as this regarding the lady's dress, because in so many instances the external is a sure index of the mind, and also because hers was so singularly becoming, in spite of, or perhaps just because of its almost quaker-like simplicity.

Certainly the two Miss Goldacres, who were seated a little further down on the opposite side of the table, looked very different, although they were dressed in the extreme of fashion, and were good-looking girls in the main. Their father was a rich stock-broker, who had a few years previously made a successful hit in the railway market, and the daughters, having just been "finished" at an expensive boarding-school, were now tasting their first experiences of continental travelling. Perhaps the difference between their appearance and that of Miss Vivian would have been less perceptible had they condescended to copy a little more the latter's severe simplicity of style, instead of having dressed themselves for a Rhine *table d'hôte* almost as gaily as for a

London flower-show. If women would but learn this!

But I have left my heroine standing too long face to face with her quondam neighbour of the dinner-table. In reality she had so stood only for a very little time. But for one moment their eyes had met; something in his face attracted her attention, and almost involuntarily she looked up a second time. Surely she knew him! Those handsome features, large but not coarse, the wavy auburn hair and laughing blue eyes, the long drooping moustache, all seemed as familiar to her as if she had known them for years. Already she had half extended her hand, but there was no sign of recognition on his part, no more in his manner than the courtesy of the merest stranger; and without being in the least conceited, Edith Vivian was well aware that for many reasons she was a person who, once seen, was not likely soon to be forgotten.

She had been mistaken then, and with a

feeling of annoyance, not altogether unmixed with disappointment, she drew back her hand, fervently trusting that its unlucky forward movement had not been observed. With a very slight inclination of the head she turned away. In another moment she had joined her party, and they left the room together.

"Who's your friend, Edith?" a merry voice whispered in Miss Vivian's ear, the moment the door had closed behind them, and the words were uttered in a tone and manner which spoke of the freedom of a sister or an old school-fellow. "I *declare* what an enormous time you have been talking to him."

"Be quiet, you silly child, how should I know?" was the answer. "I am no wiser than yourself; but if I don't know his name, at least I can show you his mark;" and Miss Vivian pointed to a long slit in her dress, the direful result of the 'durance vile' before mentioned, a result which she had generously, though not quite successfully, endeavoured to hide from the quick eyes of its author.

"The creature! What a shame!" exclaimed the other. "There's work for poor sleepy Susan before she goes to bed to-night. But, Edith?"

"But, Kate?"

"It is a pity you *don't* know him. You should have been sitting where I was, opposite. He really is remarkably good-looking, and so he thinks somebody else is, I fancy. It was worth something to see him watching you all dinner-time and trying to catch a glimpse of your face. He has been amusing me not a little, I can assure you."

"Then, it is more than he has me," replied Edith, making a little *moue*, "for he never opened his lips till he did that;" and again she pointed to her torn dress. Not that her temper was in reality in the least degree ruffled on that score; she was far above caring about such a trifling accident, but the truth was, that at that moment she was not disposed to discover even to little Kate Wentworth how really provoked she was about quite a different matter. For it had vexed her beyond measure to think that she—Miss Vivian, of Enderleigh—had been all but betrayed by a momentary impulse into claiming acquaintance, and actually offering to shake hands, with a gentleman who was evidently a perfect stranger, and that too in a public room, and before an admiring crowd. And so, to hide her discomposed feelings from all other eyes, she made the feigned annoyance do duty as a blind for concealing the real one.

Little Kate Wentworth! Why is it that some girls, ay, and women too, are called 'little' all their lives, even though they are not by nature stinted in their growth? Why is it that some men are always called 'old' from their youth upward? I leave it to my readers to solve the problem, only stating, as the result of my own experience, that the men and women to whom these appellations cling through life are, with perhaps a few exceptions, amongst the dearest and best beloved of the human race.

In real truth, 'little' Kate Wentworth was neither tall nor short, nor pretty nor plain, neither very clever nor very dull; but she was just one of those straightforward, true-hearted, unaffected, and affectionate women whom we meet with, thank God, every day of our lives. Such women bear much the same affinity to girls of the Edith Vivian type as the wild-briar rose does to the stately *Devoniensis;* but whilst the rose of Devonshire is a delicately nurtured garden flower, the briar roses spring up in the hedges unbidden, here and there and everywhere, making the highways of this world rich and pleasant with their fragrant sweetness.

Miss Vivian had called her a child, presuming on her own seniority of a year or so, but she had no longer a fair right to the title. Edith was just one-and-twenty, and looked older; she was often taken to be twenty-five. Kate was not quite twenty, and looked, on the contrary, still younger. And so the difference between them was more apparent than real, though at their respective ages the one short twelvemonth is reckoned as a vast disparity of age. Let another score of years pass over their heads, and that difference will probably have disappeared, or been entirely forgotten, even by those who have been school-girls together. And they had been schoolfellows—these two young ladies. Kate had been the youngest, the pet of the school, so perhaps it was allowable for Edith, presuming upon old associations, to think of her and speak of her sometimes as a child; more particularly as Kate herself made no objections to being so called. And she did look very young, though not childish. Hers was one of those *mignonne* pleasant faces on which Time leaves so light a trace. The invariable good humour and serenity depicted on such a face, acts in some sort as an antidote against the changes of increasing years. Not being beautiful, she had no beauty to lose; and so of Kate Wentworth it might pretty safely be prophesied that, unless some wearing illness or heavy care should come upon her in early life, to rob her cheek of its roundness, and to deepen the few lines of thought into positive wrinkles, she would continue to look youthful all her days.

Her features were small and delicate, but scarcely pretty. The nose belonged to no distinct order of noses; it was *not* Grecian, nor aquiline, nor even *retroussé*,—it was simply a nose. The mouth was not very finely cut, but it was expressive of something of firmness and a good deal of fun; the teeth were good, the hair not striking either for its colour or luxuriance, but it was always neat and well arranged.

Two or three good points she had, and, woman-like, knew how to make the most of them. Her hands and feet were perfect in form and symmetry, and her eyes were pleasant to look upon. They were honest, truthful, fearless eyes,—not very large or bright, but they looked at you with such trustful earnestness, and seemed to claim a like confidence in return. Something about them reminded you of the eyes of a shepherd's dog. I know not if this will be considered a compliment, but at any rate it is meant for one.

At school Kate had never been thought very clever, but she had always possessed a large fund of common sense; and if she had not been famous for carrying off many prizes, she had been well known as the most affectionate, unselfish little mortal that ever breathed, ever the first to do a kindness for a friend, or to seek forgiveness for a fallen foe; and therefore it was that little Kate Wentworth had always been a general favourite, for after all, as La Bruyère says, "the heart has more to do than the head in promoting the pleasures of society."

Such, then, was something of the appearance of the young lady, more famous for her oddities than her 'ologies, whom we left ascending the grand staircase of the Hôtel de Bellevue, at Bonn, by the side of Miss Vivian.

Not very fast, for a few steps in advance an elderly clergyman and his wife led the way at a leisurely pace. The lady's steps were slow and feeble, and she leant heavily on her husband's arm. It needed but a glance at Mrs. Wentworth to enable the most casual observer to perceive that she was the mother of our little Kate, nor did it need a much greater degree of penetration, when looking at the mother, to discover from whom the child had inherited her sweetness of temper and disposition.

There was the same soft light in the grey eyes, the same playful smile hanging about the lips; only the expression, which on Kate's face was one of innocent cheerfulness, was ennobled and purified in that of the elder lady into the patient serenity of the habitual invalid.

The Reverend Charles Wentworth was a tall, fine-looking man of about sixty years of age. His face was handsome still, and his eyes had lost none of their youthful fire, though he stooped a little now, and his hair was almost white. He was as much a boy at heart too, and his intellect was as keen even yet, as in those old Oxford days, when, in spite of a serious illness, and consequent loss of time, he had taken a double first, to the envy and admiration of his whole college.

"You will hardly be strong enough for lionizing this afternoon, eh, Mary dear?" he said, or rather asked. "I am afraid that shaking in the railway carriage this morning has tired you for the day."

"I am afraid so, too, Charles," she answered. "This poor foolish head of mine does not feel as though it would bear any more excitement now without revenging itself by aching to-morrow. But the girls must not lose their drive on my account: you must take them to Godesberg, Charles, and I am sure they will enjoy the excursion, and their first glimpse of Rhine beauties. It is a lovely afternoon, and promises as fine a sunset as the one we saw together there when we were on our wedding tour. Do you remember?"

Did he not remember? He softly pressed the hand which was resting on his arm, and looked tenderly down on the pale worn features of his suffering wife,—more dear to him now than even when, as the young happy bride, she had been in his eyes almost beautiful.

"As you please, my love," he answered with a sigh, "but I could have wished you to be with us, if only for the sake of those old times, though we are neither of us in danger of forgetting them, I think?"

"Not while life lasts," the lady whispered. She paused when they had reached the landing. "Kate and Edith can take care of me now," she said; "you, Charles, had better order a carriage at once for your excursion. This fashionable five o'clock dinner has only left you an hour or two of daylight, and I would not have you miss the sunset for the world."

"Are you sure, mother dear, that you like me to leave you?" Kate asked, when she and Edith had assisted Mrs. Wentworth to the sofa in the sitting-room.

"Quite sure, my bonnie Kate. Do you think I could be so selfish as to wish to keep you here just to sit and look at me when the Rhine and the Seven Mountains are for the first time within sight. No, my dear one, go by all means, and enjoy yourself to your heart's content. Susan will take good care of me, if Edith will kindly spare her to sit with me for an hour or two. I shall be thinking or dreaming of you all the while, and Edith will take a sketch of the Drachenfels for me, I know, if the light lasts long enough."

"That I will, dear Mrs. Wentworth, and do much more than that to please you. You are so good and kind to me, treating me just like a second Kate. It is like having my own mamma again, *almost*."

And Edith held Mrs. Wentworth's hand a moment longer in her own, *just because* she was thinking of that loved lost mother, who, in the course of the long life which perhaps lay before her she would never see again. Those who had only seen the proud Miss Vivian in the uncongenial atmosphere of a crowded ball-room, might easily have failed to recognize her in the gentle girl who was now kneeling by Mrs. Wentworth's side, and who in her present aspect looked so much more captivating.

"Come, girls, be quick!" exclaimed Mr. Wentworth, as he entered the room; "get your hats or bonnets, or whatever head-gear you choose to wear, and make ready for a start. I have ordered the carriage, and it will be at the door with all possible German speed."

The girls, as they were thus collectively called, left the room without further parley, and, to do them justice, did not keep him waiting long. Yet, before they returned equipped for their drive, his ardour for the enterprise had considerably abated, and, seated by his wife's sofa, he looked as if he would gladly have remained there for the rest of the afternoon. Presently, however, he roused himself with an effort, and, shrugging his shoulders, remarked that, as a man of England, he supposed he should be expected to do his duty; and then, with a low bow, he begged Miss Edith to observe that he placed himself completely at her disposal. And so, with a parting kiss to the invalid, they started on their little excursion; the younger members of the party, with light hearts and a delighted consciousness of enjoyment. Edith and Kate were enthusiastic travellers; this was the first time they had been away from England; moreover, this was their first glimpse of the Rhine, and although its banks in the neighbourhood of Bonn lack something of the grandeur of scenery for which a score or two of miles higher up it is so justly famous, still there was enough of picturesque beauty to charm Miss Vivian's artist's eye; for she was by no means one of those little great people who think it beneath their dignity to be either surprised or pleased. To her, therefore, and to Kate Wentworth, all wore the charm of novelty. But to my reader the Rhine and Rolandseck, and the Seven Mountains, are, doubtless, nearly as familiar, in these days of easy travelling, as the glades of Richmond or the terraces of Hampton Court. I will not, therefore, attempt to describe the river as our travellers saw it that night, from the pretty village and hill of Godesberg, or the sketch of the "castled crag" of Drachenfels, as it stood out in picturesque relief in the red light of the setting sun, which Edith did find time enough to commence, but will, instead, endeavour to tell, in as few words as possible, something of the early life of the young lady who is to be the heroine of my tale.

So back to merry England, reader, on the swift wings of the imagination.

CHAPTER II.

The New Forest is situated, as nearly all the world knows, in the county of Hants. Within the precincts of that forest, which the Norman conqueror created in his mood of selfish recklessness, and the Saxon peasant watered with tears of blood, and almost within sight of the spot where, according to the superstitious idea of the times, the Red King forfeited his life in expiation of the cruel deed of his father, a half-dozen or so of straggling cottages and a turnpike gate had been for many years courteously designated as the village of Enderleigh. To the left of this village a richly wooded park stretched away for some distance over the undulating ground. In the centre of the park, and situated upon a gentle elevation, which made it visible here and there from the high road, was a large red brick house. The park and house inclusive were sometimes known to the world by the title of Enderleigh Priory, sometimes by that of Enderleigh Park. Not that such a distinctive appellation was much needed; for, on the principle that Paris is France, so to all intents and purposes Enderleigh Park or Priory was Enderleigh, and the straggling cottages and turnpike gate were simply outskirts of the village proper contained within the lodge gates of the park itself. Not that the estate was of such great extent, for in reality it covered only a few hundred acres of ground, but the old Priory of Enderleigh had existed for years and years before the village was known or thought of. The latter indeed had sprung up around it like ivy round the oak, depending upon the religious establishment for its very existence and support. A few picturesque ruins alone remained now to mark the site of what was Enderleigh Priory in the olden time ; the monastery having been broken up and destroyed, amongst so many others, at the time when King Henry VIII. suppressed most of the religious houses throughout England.

The village of Enderleigh boasted not even of a church. Since the decay of the Priory Chapel there had been no place of worship nearer than the pretty old church of Lyndford, four miles distant, until, rather more than a score of years before the period at which my tale commences, the late proprietress had created a beautiful chapel of ease on her own estate, not far from the ruins of the former one.

Later, a school-house had been added and some almshouses, making a goodly pile of buildings, as seen from the high road.

And so, as I said before, and taking into account the number of cottages, stables, and offices belonging to the house, the greater and more important part of Enderleigh village was comprised within the limits of the park itself.

And a beautiful park it was; as most persons thought when once they had entered within the lodge gates. On the right-hand, from amongst the tall elm-trees, the little chapel lifted its tapering spire towards Heaven. Here, too, were the school-house and the almshouses before spoken of. On the left, a clear sparkling trout stream flowed merrily on through the lower meadow land, spanned by a rustic bridge centuries old. Everywhere the forest trees grew in rich luxuriance, interspersed here and there with a dark cedar or copper beech. The graceful deer were to be seen ever and anon in the background, and they even ventured at times quite close to the noble avenue of elm trees, a quarter of a mile in length, which led from the high road up to the modern house. Many things combined to give to Enderleigh an air of stately and aristocratic beauty which the comparatively limited extent of the estate might not otherwise have warranted.

After the priory had been wrested from

the hands of the Church by Henry VIII., it was bestowed by him upon one of his many rapacious followers, and it remained in the possession of his family till the close of the last century. By that time, however, the descendants of the original possessor were reduced by improvidence and misfortune to absolute poverty, and the beautiful Elizabethan mansion, which for more than two hundred years had stood there, was fast falling to decay. The last childless descendant of a race which once had been as famous in history as the Howards or De Bohuns, lived as an exile and a bankrupt to see the home of his childhood, where ten generations of his ancestors had lived and died, pass into the hands of a stranger, one of those merchant princes of India who had just returned from the El Dorado of the East, where he had spent the greater part of his previous life.

One of the first acts of Sir George Neville on taking possession of his newly purchased estate was to level to the ground the old ruined mansion, which had long been tenanted only by the owls and the bats, and to erect in its stead the more modern edifice of which mention has before been made. The architecture of this, bearing as it did the date of the third King of the house of Hanover, gave evidence of solidity and comfort rather than of beauty of design, especially when seen from a distance. On a nearer approach, however, one made the discovery, that on that side of the house which overlooked the pleasure grounds more than one oriel window and a graceful domed conservatory had been added in later days; and these, although they might not add to the congruity of the whole building, were certainly an improvement in point of taste upon the straight façade and square high windows grouped around the entrance hall. A woman's hand had done this, the same which had raised the little chapel, of which mention has before been made. Sir George Neville married twice; his first wife died young and childless; the second he brought as a bride to Enderleigh. Neither young nor beautiful, she possessed what her husband cared for far more than either youth or beauty—wealth; more wealth to add, as is so often the case, to a fortune which was already very considerable. Amiable as she was, the rich wife was but little loved. The worldly husband had married her for her money, and, doubtless, in the hope that she would bring him an heir to his new estate and to the baronet's title which he had been the first of his family to bear.

But the blessing so earnestly coveted, yet sought for only in an unsanctified *mariage de convenance*, was denied. One only child, a girl, was born to the bitterly disappointed father. Sickly from her birth, shunned and disliked by Sir George, who could not forgive the accident of her sex, the poor child grew up of a timid, shrinking, nervously sensitive disposition. Never was heiress less like an heiress than the quiet Margaret Neville. Yet after a while her gentle unobtrusive virtues won from her worldly father, as virtue will sometimes win from the most worldly, the tribute of admiration and esteem. A few years later, when Sir George Neville died, after an illness of only a few hours' duration, it was found that he had left to his only daughter all that was in his power to bestow—the estate of Enderleigh Priory and all his personal property, with the exception of a moderate jointure to his widow and a few trifling legacies. The title which he would have given half his wealth to have seen perpetuated in his own immediate family, went to a younger cousin, of whom in his lifetime he had seen but little, and whom, perhaps for the very fact of his presumptive heirship, he had always cordially disliked.

Happy are they who "live so as to be missed." But Sir George Neville was not one of these honourable of the earth. After the effects of the fearful shock caused by his sudden death had passed away, the grief, if not the memory, of her loss was soon effaced from the mind of his widow, and perhaps the happiest years of her whole life were those which succeeded her husband's death, and which she spent at Enderleigh in the dearly loved companionship of her only child.

Together the mother and daughter led secluded, almost saintlike, lives. Much good they did in their generation. Shunning almost entirely the society of their equals, they devoted themselves daily and hourly to the relief of the sick and afflicted who dwelt around them. Then it was that the little Gothic chapel, the school-house, and the almshouses were built, and then it was that by degrees Enderleigh Priory acquired nearly as much the character of a charitable and religious establishment as it had borne at the time of the Wars of the Roses.

Good, simple-minded, true-hearted women these were, and yet not faultless more than others ; though they led in some sort happy and useful lives. There was a selfishness in their very charities. Had they lost all thought that society had other claims upon their wealth than those of mere almsgiving? In thus studiously shutting themselves away from the outer world and its duties and occupations, had they quite forgotten that the best preparation for life is not "to have been ignorant of evil but to have known it and avoided it?" Like Milton, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where the immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."

Short-sighted and narrow-minded was their exclusive policy, and one of the two lived to reap its bitter fruits.

Eight years after the death of her husband Lady Neville also died, and her daughter Margaret, at the age of twenty-three, was left the sole proprietress of Enderleigh Priory, with a clear rent roll of £7000 a year.

Young and timid to a fault, totally ignorant of the world and its ways, and broken-hearted at the loss of her last surviving parent, the young heiress shrunk from the responsibility of her position with all the morbid sensitiveness of her nature. Her very blessings became to her a burden almost *too* heavy to bear. Each duty was performed with punctual and scrupulous fidelity, and yet her whole life's happiness was poisoned by the tormenting dread of doing that which had been better left undone, or of leaving undone that which had been better done.

Her cousin, the present baronet, assisted her in the management of her estate. There were not wanting those who insinuated that Sir Edward Neville lived to regret that a romantic love match, made a few years back, now proved a bar to his seeking to share her responsibility upon more rightful grounds than were afforded by the mere ties of cousinly relationship. It was a pity, others said, that it was thus impossible that the title and estates could be reunited. Be this as it might, Margaret Neville had only cause to rejoice that her cousin was a married man.

For months after her mother's death the heiress lived a life almost of uttter solitude, shrinking, with this one exception, from the society of even her relations. Unlike many, however, whose education has been based upon narrow-minded principles, she was not self-willed, and after a time the remonstrances of Sir Edward Neville, and the persuasions of one dearly loved friend, induced her to renounce her solitary life, and to take her part again in general society.

What wonder that one so ignorant of the world and its wickedness should fall an easy prey to the arts of the deceiver? What wonder that the little bark, hitherto so closely moored and sheltered from the storms of life, when thus suddenly launched upon the untried sea, should strike upon the sunken rocks, and so make utter shipwreck?

Captain Vivian was handsome, brilliant, fascinating. Margaret Neville felt this the very first time they chanced to meet; not long after she was fain to acknowledge that her heart owned him for its sovereign lord and master.

Alas, if there was much of the harmlessness of the dove, there was but little of the wisdom of the serpent in her composition. Little did she dream, poor innocent child, how eagerly the society of the heiress of Enderleigh had been sought by one who was only anxious to call its broad acres his own. Still less did she imagine that he, whom in her secret soul she almost worshipped as the noblest, the most chivalrous of his sex, was no better than a scheming adventurer after all.

There were many objections raised to the marriage. Captain Vivian was known by all to be very poor; by some few he was known to be deeply involved. He was many years older than his young bride; moreover he was a widower, and the father of a handsome boy of ten years old. Nevertheless, for reasons of his own, Sir Edward

Neville chose to favour the match. The young heiress for once was resolved to have her own way, and in a very short time from the date of their first meeting, Margaret Neville married Captain Vivian.

As may easily be supposed, the union between two persons of such opposite natures and principles was not a happy one, and poor Margaret's case was but another of the many instances which prove the truth of the old proverb about 'marrying in haste to repent at leisure.' Hers was a sad awakening from a happy day-dream. 'She never told' her grief. The gentle humble spirit, so truly humble in its estimate of self, was yet too proud for that. No torture could have wrung from her lips the tale of her cruel disappointment; only the bright gleam of sunshine which had gladdened her cheerless life for a little space died out again at once and for ever, and in its place there came a settled despondency, a distrust of all around her, which, in one so young, and who had before been only too confiding, was very sad to see.

It was a cruel ordeal through which she had to pass, this learning out of her own bitter experience the wickedness of the world in which she lived.

To a person of her disposition, the trial was peculiarly severe, and her health, which had never been strong, began by degrees to fail. Day by day her cheek grew paler, and her step more languid and listless. And yet the tender spirit did not break at once, it only bent beneath the rude shock of her life's disappointment. Still, amidst the wreck of her shattered hopes, she found that there was much left to her worth living for. Her husband's extravagance, and the liquidation of the debts incurred before his marriage, made deep inroads into her handsome fortune; but by economy and strict self-denial she was still enabled to continue her many charities to the poor around her, although the almsgiving at Enderleigh was not carried on, perhaps, on so magnificent a scale as when the widowed Lady Neville and her daughter lived only to do good.

She was very kind to her husband's son, and learnt to love him dearly, almost as dearly as she loved the one precious child who, a little more than a year after her marriage, was given into her arms, to fill in some measure the aching void in her heart, which nothing in this world would ever quite fill again.

Ernest Vivian was a fine handsome boy, the son of a mother who had been little more than an Irish peasant girl, though she boasted that in her veins ran the blood of the old Celtic kings. About twelve years before, while making an excursion in Ireland, at the time his regiment was quartered at Fermoy, Captain Vivian had been seized with a sudden and severe attack of fever in a small village near Killarney. During the dangerous illness which ensued he was nursed with unremitting care and kindness by the farmer at whose house he had been taken ill, and by the farmer's wife and daughter.

Then followed the old story. Before

Captain Vivian had half recovered from his illness, he and the young Norah O'Connor had fallen desperately in love with each other. The girl was very beautiful, and what was better, virtuous and good. Either Captain Vivian feared to meet her scorn, or else he loved her too well to tempt her to her own dishonour, and so he asked her to be his wife. When he left Killarney, his gentle nurse went with him as his loving bride.

The young officer in his impetuosity had hardly given himself time to think whether, when the first romance of his passion had died away, his beautiful but untutored Norah would be quite the fitting mistress of an Englishman's home. But she was not destined to be so tried. Within twelve months of her marriage, happily, perhaps, for her, she died, leaving her husband the father of the little Ernest, then an infant of only a few days old.

Captain Vivian, who had already begun to tire of his lovely wife as of a petted plaything, did not devote much time or thought to the care of her child. The first years of the little boy's life were spent with his mother's relatives, and upon his father's return to England, he was sent, though still very young, to school.

But after his father's second marriage his holidays were always spent at Enderleigh, and then Ernest Vivian began to realize that he had a home. Poor little motherless child, it was a new era in his life when his young stepmother first welcomed him in her loving arms, and he learnt to feel that there was one other woman who would be as kind to him as the doating old grandmother, whose parting tears and caresses he could just remember. He repaid her love and care with almost chivalrous devotion. In all his childish outbursts of passion, when threats and even punishments were worse than useless, a word or look from her would recall him to his better self. Her slightest wish was to him a law; her few words of praise his dearest and his best re-ward. Well would it have been for him if she had lived till later years to be his friend and counsellor.

Again an only daughter was born to the inheritance of Enderleigh; again a father's heart ached with grievous disappointment at the failure of his hopes of a male heir; again the mother clung with almost idolatrous affection to the little girl who had been given to her love.

For some time the little heiress was about as great a contrast as could well be, both in appearance and disposition, to what her mother, the quiet Margaret Neville, had been at her age. She was proud, impulsive, and wilful, to a degree which almost made her mother shrink in terror from the very child of her love, tracing as she did in that child's nature the germs at least of many of her father's faults. In person she was singularly like him, with this difference, that the dark piercing eyes and decided features which, in the *man*, were strikingly handsome, were far from prepossessing in the child. In fact hers was a face which many might have called 'plain'; and yet a keen critic might have prophesied that, by and by, if time should smooth away the too frequent frowns from her low classical brow, and bring into more frequent play the smile of rare beauty which sometimes hovered on her lips, her countenance in womanhood would belong to a high order of female beauty. "Take my word for it, Margaret," Sir Edward Neville had once said to Mrs. Vivian, "and I am no bad judge in such matters, your dark-eyed girl will be the toast of the county before she is twenty; ay, and would be too if she were a peasant's daughter, instead of the heiress that she is."

So, too, with her disposition. In spite of many childish imperfections, she was of a noble nature—generous to a fault, affectionate, ready to own herself in the wrong when once fairly convinced of the fact, capable of any amount of self-devotion towards those whom she really loved and respected. Her very faults, as some one has said, were "virtues run to seed." In time, and with judicious "training and restraining," these faults might again become virtues. Pride might be softened into the generous scorn which despises only what is ignoble and mean; wilfulness tempered into mere strength of will and energy of purpose; the fitful natural impulse ennobled into the steady Christian principle, and passion itself chastened into the honest enthusiasm of a warm temperament for all that is great and good, and the equally honest hatred of evil. Whether or not this rich promise of future excellence was fulfilled in after years, it will be my readers' task to decide.

Ernest Vivian loved his little sister very dearly; in all his holiday time at Enderleigh she was his most cherished plaything. He waited on her like a very slave, till one day some one told him that if it had not been for her he would in all likelihood have been the heir to Enderleigh, or at least, to a large share of his stepmother's property.

"Jealousy is cruel as the grave." Ernest Vivian was jealous by nature, and the poisoned shaft hit home. From that hour the bond of confidence and affection between him and his child-sister was broken, and poor little Edith had to bear as best she might the neglect and indifference of her former playfellow. Happily for her, she was too young to take it much to heart, but Mrs. Vivian saw and lamented the change. At a loss to account for it, she could only imagine that it proceeded from a jealous fear that he would now be supplanted in her affection, and so she only noticed it by increasing, if possible, her kindness to himself. It would have been a hard task for even an unfriendly eye to detect that her husband's child was less cared for than her own.

Not that under any circumstances Margaret Vivian was one who would have risked her little girl's future happiness by over-indulgence in youth. Spoiled darling of the world as she knew she must be, she would not have her own conscience burdened with the thought that she had helped to spoil her more. And so out of her very love for her darling, she was often more stern to her than to any other living creature. The sternness was but the "severe aspect of her mercy." Her own experience of wealth and its responsibilities had not been so free from care that she should represent it to her daughter as an unmixed blessing. She had learnt but too surely that, flattered and sought as she had been when the rich heiress, as the wife she had been neglected and unloved. Alas, her mother's experience had only tended to the same sad result.

What wonder that with such warning examples before her, she, the most guileless of human beings, should at last have grown suspicious? What wonder that her teaching to her child should be of the world's falsehood and the deceitfulness of riches? What wonder that her hope and prayer for that child should be that Edith's character might be in many things different from her own—less yielding, less dependent, more fitted to fight the battle of life amidst the trials and temptations which must inevitably assail her, that so she might run less risk of meeting with such total shipwreck of her happiness as she herself had done?

Too well she knew that that battle would have to be fought *alone.* Already she felt within her the seeds of a malady which not many years after consigned her to an untimely grave.

And if Captain Vivian should survive her, she could not but fear that his influence and parental authority, if exercised at all, would prove inimical rather than beneficial to her daughter's best interests.

But this trial at least was spared her, for her husband died in her own lifetime. Suddenly, even more suddenly than in her father's case, without an instant's warning, he was summoned to his last account. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

One bright October morning, a party of

gentlemen sallied forth joyously from a little Highland cottage, bent on a shooting excursion over a Scotch moor. They walked on for hours and hours, all fatigue forgotten in the excitement of the sport and the animated conversation which was carried on the while, then—suddenly—a gun in the hands of an unskilful sportsman went off by accident,—the merest accident, and yet one of those accidents which work the will of God,—and then there was a wild shriek, a convulsive bound into the air, a heavy fall, one deep death-like groan—and one of the party who had gone forth so merrily on that October morning was carried back, in the grey twilight, to the little Highland cottage a cold and lifeless corpse.

The strong man was struck down in his very prime of strength; the selfish worldling was torn in a moment from all he held most dear; "the silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl was broken, and a man was gone to his long home, and the mourners went about the streets."

And so Captain Vivian died, and once again there was a widowed mistress at the Priory, and once again the heiress of Enderleigh was a young and fatherless girl.

* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *

Scarcely sixteen was Edith Vivian when her mother died. At the age when childhood and womanhood appear to meet, she mourned her loss with all a child's intensity of feeling, and yet with the unforgetful tenderness of a woman.

A Christian in name, a Christian by education and choice, Edith had not yet attained to the Christian fulness of privilege, nor learnt to realize that "it is the highest prerogative of faith to have no will but God's." And so for a time her grief was passionate, as might have been expected in one of her ardent and excitable temperament, and it even needed the force of authority and of a strong will to remove her from the room in which was laid the lifeless form of her lost mother, whom she had tended in her last illness with a skill and patience of devotion far beyond her years.

Ernest Vivian was not in England when Mrs. Vivian died. He was away—far away—somewhere in Italy, in Germany, in America; none knew exactly where. No letters had been received from him for many months—for more than a year indeed—previously. After Captain Vivian's death he changed much for the worse. The jealousy of his nature seemed gradually to gain ground, and by degrees to crush and overpower his nobler qualities. He became morose, unsettled, self-willed. Even his step-mother's influence over him seemed to have decreased, and she was not sorry when the offer of a diplomatic appointment at Madrid opened for him a career in a new and perhaps more congenial atmosphere. He accepted it. But from the time he left England his communication with Enderleigh became very broken and irregular. The last news that had been heard of him (and that not from himself) was about a year before, to the effect that he had suddenly, and without any ostensible reason, thrown up his appointment as *attaché* at Madrid, and had gone to Mexico, intending to return from thence to Europe—probably to Vienna. It was therefore hardly possible, amidst so much uncertainty, to convey to him the intelligence of Mrs. Vivian's dangerous illness, or I think that, with his old love for his gentle stepmother, he would not have allowed his place by her bedside of suffering to have remained vacant long. When she died it was equally impossible to tell him of her death. Ill news, it is said, travels fast; but in this case it could not reach him at all by private means, for they had no clew to his address.

And so Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth (Mrs. Vivian's oldest and dearest friends), and one other lady, a Miss Neville, niece to Edith's grandfather, and therefore cousin to the present baronet, were the only friends who were with the young orphan in her sad hour of trial. But these were enough: better friends she could not have had. Mrs. Wentworth's tenderness was almost equal to that of the mother she had lost; whilst her husband strove not in vain to instil into the young mourner's sorrow a more chastened spirit of resignation to the will of God. Moreover, Miss Neville, a lady possessed of a large share of common sense and worldly wisdom, and at the same time of much genuine kindness of heart, was by no means an unsuitable companion for Edith, when, during the reaction which followed upon the first excitement of her grief, her strength and energies needed to be freshly roused to the duties and occupations of every-day life.

But what need to dwell longer on that time of sadness? The experience of suffering is but too universal in this our fallen world. Who has not felt at some period of their lives that sense of utter desolation, that dreary sinking of the heart, when the allotted time for idle mourning is past, and the mourner is forced to turn his thoughts away from the one subject to which they would fain cling for ever, and fix them again on the things of time and sense?

Who has not also felt, thank God, how by degrees Time, the great restorer, has softened away the first bitterness of grief into only a holy calm feeling of remembrance that often sanctifies the life. It was so in Edith's case. Little by little the poor girl revived in the atmosphere of kindness and consideration. After a time the white lips, which for days and weeks could not even speak without quivering, broke forth again into merry childish laughter, and to the poor bruised spirit, which seemed well nigh broken at first, there came in time new life and energy, and even a freshness of gaiety and heart-felt capability of enjoyment, as though she had never known what sorrow was.

A writer of the present day has said, "How much kinder is God to us than we are willing to be to ourselves! At the loss of every dear face, at the last going of every well-beloved one, we doom ourselves to an eternity of sorrow, and look to waste ourselves away in an ever-running fountain of tears. How seldom does such grief endure;

how blessed is the goodness which forbids it to do so."

Miss Neville (more commonly called Aunt Fanny by Edith and her mother, though she was in reality cousin to the latter) had several times been a guest at Enderleigh during Mrs. Vivian's lifetime. Margaret liked and esteemed the kind-hearted old-fashioned maiden cousin, and, in spite of her peculiarities, learnt to recognize in her acute judgment and practical good sense the very qualities she could most wish for in a companion for her orphan child. And so, when Mrs. Vivian felt that her end was very near, she sent once again for good kind Fanny Neville, and won from her a promise that until Edith should be of age or should marry she would live with her at Enderleigh as her companion and protector; Captain Vivian having long ago appointed Sir Edward Neville to be his child's guardian in the event of his own decease. Poor and actually homeless as she was, it might be supposed that Miss Neville would not hesitate to accede to her cousin's wish; but, blunt and cross as she could often be, Fanny Neville was true and honest to the heart's core, and not till she had well weighed the question in her own mind, whether, with her own peculiarities of manner and infirmities of temper, she would be able to cope with Edith's strong will and impulsive nature, did she consent to Mrs. Vivian's proposal. At last love at heart prevailed. One quiet night, by Margaret's bedside, on bended knees and with streaming eyes, the promise was given, and, once given, was faithfully performed. Time, strength, and energy, every talent was devoted to the task she had undertaken. She shrank from no sacrifice, spared herself no self-denial or trouble, so that she might do her duty by her cousin's child; and in spite of much disparity of temperament and occasional disagreements, Edith and her aunt were well suited as companions and were sincerely attached to each other. They led a happy life together at Enderleigh, varied by a visit to Sir Edward Neville at Haughton Manor, or a week spent occasionally by Edith at Lyndford Rectory with her dear Mrs. Wentworth and her old playmate and schoolfellow, little Kate; for Edith, unlike her mother, had been partly educated at school. Mrs. Vivian, at Mrs. Wentworth's earnest entreaty, and for the sake of Edith's future good, had been persuaded to part with her child for a time, and allowed her to go to the same school as Kate Wentworth for nearly two years.

The atmosphere of school life, dangerous as it is to many girls, dangerous as it was in some respects to my heroine, had been in others of incalculable benefit to her future happiness. Fortunately, Edith's mistress was one who did not allow the distinctions of rank or wealth to interfere with her duties towards her pupil; and although all her companions might not be so free from the love of those poisonous things, the pomps and vanities of the world, still, on the whole, her two years of school life did Edith more good than harm. It did much towards counteracting the morbid self-consciousness and tenacity of opinion, which are the faults, perhaps the only faults, generated by a home education. Her thoughts and ideas relating to the world lying beyond the region of her own home began rapidly to expand, and by the time she was sixteen the young heiress of Enderleigh had contrived to lay in a far larger stock of experience and worldly wisdom (by which I do not mean worldly-mindedness), than her simple-hearted mother had possessed during her whole life.

One thing she learnt, however, which she would gladly have left alone, one bitter humiliating truth, which her own mother's teaching and experience only served, alas, to confirm. She learnt that in this world men and women, and even school-girls, will bow and cringe to the rich and powerful, flattering them, and making pretence of affection which they do not really feel, for the sake of some fancied benefit which may accrue to themselves in return. She saw and heard so much of this idolatry of wealth, that, too young to distinguish between the true and the false, she grew to distrust those to whom she might have given her whole confidence, and learnt to doubt all alike, all save the little charmed circle of loving hearts at home. And then her mother's dying words, "Edith, my child," she had said, "you have never heard me speak evil of your father, God forgive me if I do so now. *He* only knows how I loved him to the last; but, Edith, he deceived me. Too soon, and yet too late I discovered, to my sorrow and shame, that it was not Margaret Neville but Enderleigh he had loved. Oh, my darling, my heart's darling, may God in His mercy spare you from ever feeling such pain as I felt then. I could almost have cursed the riches which had been given me as blessings. Take good care, my own, that you, too, are not thus deceived. By-and-by, when you find yourself sought after and courted by the world, for you will be rich for a woman, Edith, and the men are all alike, be very sure that you are loved for your own sake, and not for the sake of your wealth. And if some day you should be tempted to marry, and I suppose that day and that temptation will certainly come, I say again only be very, very sure that the husband of your choice is really and truly what he seems to be. Think how your own mother loved and was deceived, and remember what she tells you now."

And did that child remember? Oh, cruel mother, cruel though so loving; you little knew how much of future misery you were preparing for your orphan girl by thus sowing in her heart those seeds of distrust and suspicion. What wonder that in a soil so prepared for their reception they should spring up quickly and bear bitter fruit. That poisoned truth, for a truth it was, though not the whole truth, sank deep into the young sensitive spirit, and went on rankling there for many a long year. It was a truth, that in this weary world Mammon has many worshippers; but not the whole truth, inasmuch as, God be thanked, *He* hath reserved to Himself thousands who have not bowed the knee to the false deity; men who, in an age of self-seeking and worldliness, yet love honour rather than wealth, and are not so blind to their truest interests, but that they would still choose the dinner of herbs where love is, rather than the stalled ox and hatred therewith.

But of this poor Edith was ignorant, and only saw the darker side of the picture. Grievously the young heiress's pride and feelings rebelled at the thought of what lay in store for her. She, the most enthusiastic, affectionate of human beings, must learn from henceforth to keep watch and ward over every thought and word, to curb each generous impulse, lest it should be taken advantage of; she, who seemed to live only to be loved, must, for the future, try each word or sign of affection in others by the severe test of the judgment before she allowed herself to believe in them.

It was hard to bear; and well was it for her that such stern teaching and discipline did not sour her temper or check her natural kindness of heart, but only threw her back with more unreserved confidence upon those whose love had been tried in the dark hours of sickness and sorrow and been found faithful.

With regard to matrimony, Edith at sixteen thought this was a question that could be readily settled. "The men were all alike;" had not her own mother said it? If so many others wiser than herself thought it impossible that she, as an heiress, could ever be sure of being loved for her own sake, she would take the initiative at once, and, acting upon the defensive, make up her mind never to marry at all. She and her aunt would live on happily at their castle of Enderleigh, despisers of men in general, and of marrying men in particular, rejoicing in all the luxury of independence, and resolved to show the envious world how happy two old maids could be. And when Aunt Fanny died, as she supposed she would some day, Kate Wentworth would come and live altogether at Enderleigh (if Kate, as was expected of her, should also decline the holy estate of matrimony). Or she would found some new order of Protestant Sisters at the Priory (something after the model of the Princess in Tennyson's poem), of which she would be the first honoured and almost sainted matron.

This was Edith's plan of her future life as sketched at sixteen. Very prudent it was, doubtless, and wise and excellent, only it was so very unnatural and so very unlikely to be carried out.

She often discussed these projects with her aunt, who was to go partners in the arrangement. The latter would listen with much attention and interest, and sometimes volunteer valuable suggestions on the subject; but there was always (so it seemed to Edith) a sly smile lurking about the corners of her mouth at such times, which that young lady neither quite understood nor quite appreciated. "Aunt Fanny must know her too well to think she was joking on the subject; it was no joking matter for her, but a very serious one." The truth was, Aunt Fanny *did* know her too well to attempt any opposition to her Utopian scheme.

Sir Edward Neville smiled too, when he heard of his ward's visionary plans, but he smiled in a different fashion and for a different purpose. He had a little game of his own to play by-and-by, and so for the present remained quiet, 'biding his time patiently.' He laughingly agreed with her when, upon being more than once rallied by him on the subject of matrimony, she answered "that there was time enough to think of that." "Quite right," he said, "she *was* too young as yet, it would be well to wait till she was of age. All women, especially rich ones, should think well before they risked their life's happiness on such a cast of the die." The Baronet's words were very true, but did he or did he not remember that at the time he had named, when Edith would be of age, his two soldier sons would, in all probability, be at home on furlough? Very likely he did remember, for Sir Edward was a poor man, yet endowed with his full share of foresight and worldly wisdom.

From her earliest years Edith had always rather cordially disliked her guardian, and what was worse had taken but little pains to conceal the fact. His polished artificial manners chilled and frightened her, and there was a keen hard look in his grey eyes that repelled all confidence. However, she was grateful to him for not interfering more than was necessary in the management of affairs at Enderleigh, especially for not interfering in her anti-matrimonial schemes. These had hitherto prospered well. In spite of two seasons spent in London, she had been successful in eluding the cunning snares of all fortune hunters; and at the age of twenty-one the proud Miss Vivian could boast (a strange boast some girls might think it) that she had not received a single offer of marriage.

It had been the intention of the aunt and niece to spend a third season in town during the spring of the year in which I have introduced Miss Vivian to my readers; but Miss Fanny Neville's health, never very strong at any time, had been considerably affected for some time previously, and Edith, by dint of scolding and coaxing, at last induced her unselfish aunt to forego the promised gaieties of London for that year, and to accompany her on a visit to Haughton Manor instead.

It had been a long standing promise that Edith should go and stay for some weeks at her guardian's the year she came of age; her visit had been much talked of and looked forward to by her Haughton cousins; and now at last it was to be fulfilled. But alas, for the baronet's long cherished plans. How true is the old French proverb! *L'homme propose et Dieu dispose.*

The last steamer from India had brought with it, not his expected eldest son, George, the future baronet, but the unpleasing intelligence that the same George had just taken unto himself a wife—the young and portionless daughter of a lately deceased officer. So all the matrimonial hopes Sir Edward might have entertained in that quarter were at an end.

His second son Harry was in England certainly, having lately returned from India on furlough for two years; but as ill-luck would have it, no sooner had Edith announced her intention of accepting her guardian's pressing and oft-repeated invitation to Gloucestershire, than it was found that Harry had engaged himself to spend the very month of her visit with a brother officer at the lakes. So the many excellent hints and injunctions, which Sir Edward had been giving him for some time past, touching his conduct towards his rich cousin, had all been given in vain.

Poor Sir Edward fretted and fumed, he urged and remonstrated, but it was of no use. He never could quite understand that handsome boy of his. Harry listened politely and patiently enough, but the baronet never could tell whether his words made any impression or no—they seemed to glide off the surface of his son's easy polished manner.

The father was too much a man of the world to lay any great stress on the real reason which made him so earnestly wish Harry to be at home during his rich cousin's visit; and so he had none to urge plausible enough to excuse the breach of a previous engagement. The son answered lightly, but was very firm. "It was unfortunate, certainly," he said, "but it could not be helped. He could not possibly disappoint his friend Norman. The fair Edith must do the best she could to amuse herself without him," and so on. After a good deal of discussion on the subject it ended thus, Sir Edward lost his little game and Master Harry went to Cumberland.

Edith *was* just a little disappointed, when upon arriving at Haughton she found that her cousin Harry was gone away. She had never seen him but once before in all her life, and that was on one of her birthdays, twelve years ago now. She had a fancy to find out whether he was at all like what he was then (a fine high-spirited boy, very unlike his father), or whether the world had spoilt him, as it spoils so many. But when very profuse apologies were made to her on all sides for his absence, and much more said by Sir Edward and Minnie Neville about his most unfortunate engagement than was at all necessary, the young heiress began to see through their 'little game,' and to congratulate herself on having had a fortunate escape. She had not much time to think of these things, however, for the state of her aunt's health claimed a good deal of attention, and gave her some anxiety. Miss Neville's complaint was rheumatism. She was recommended to try the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle as a cure. And so it was settled that a little later in the year, when Edith's visit at Haughton was over, she and her aunt should go to Aix to make trial of their efficacy.

Miss Vivian was as pleased as any child

at the idea of going abroad. Why she had never gone before she could not think now. But I am afraid that half her delight was to be traced to a little plan which had come into her own head, of which one of the chief recommendations was, that her guardian was to know nothing about it.

She would ask the Wentworths to go with her. Kate of course *must* go. Such a thing could not be thought of as that she should go abroad for the first time without Kate. And if Kate, why not her mother? She had left poor Mrs. Wentworth very weak and ill when she went away from Enderleigh a few weeks before, and nothing was so likely to restore her strength as such a perfect change as this. She would be paymistress for the whole party; there *was* some pleasure in being rich after all.

Aunt Edith for once felt truly happy when Mrs. Wentworth, partly for her own sake and partly for Kate's, gratefully accepted the delicately-worded invitation. But when it was also found that Mr. Wentworth had arranged with a friend to take his duty for two or three Sundays, and could go with them for a whole month, then her delight was perfect.

Mr. Wentworth made his own terms, and laughingly told Edith that he was going entirely on his own account, to see that they did not get into any mischief, and that he did not mean to allow any young lady to 'stand treat' for him.

Edith pouted and shook her head, but when he threatened to take himself off in a diametrically opposite direction, if she made any fuss about it, she was obliged to give in, and to confess that she would rather have him on any terms than not at all.

Thus the tour promised to be a great success. Edith declared she felt quite young again at the very thought (she was always trying to make herself out very old). They would go to Belgium and see everything worth seeing. And when her aunt, Miss Neville, was comfortably settled at Aix-la-Chapelle with some friends whom she expected to meet, she did not see why Mr. Wentworth should not escort the others for a few days' excursion to that lovely Rhine, of which they had heard so much. The Drachenfels, the Lurlei, Heidelberg, Baden Baden—names which made her very heart beat to speak of—all these would be within their reach.

Don't smile, fair reader, you who may perhaps have seen the grand defiles of Switzerland or the sunny plains of Italy, and may, therefore, be tempted to think less of places nearer home. Our heroine was young and enthusiastic—she had the right spirit for travelling—a spirit ready to admire everything that *was* admirable, without making any ill-timed comparisons.

Such then was the plan that Edith and Mr. Wentworth sketched out between them—a delightful one in itself, but particularly delightful to Edith's wilful little heart, for the simple reason that her guardian was to know nothing about it—nothing at least of 'the plan within a plan,' if I may call it so.

Sir Edward Neville knew, of course, that she was going to Aix-la-Chapelle with her aunt; but as he had always shown himself very jealous of 'Wentworth interference,' she did not think it at all necessary to inform him that she meant to go on to Baden and the Rhine in company with Mr. Wentworth and his family. She was of age now moreover, and intended to be her own mistress for the future. Nothing occurred to alter or delay their proposed excursion; and one bright morning, about the middle of August, the whole party landed on the quay at Antwerp, and a happier, more genial party of pleasure seekers it would have been hard to find.

After a brief interval of rest, the real business of sight seeing began. Mr. Wentworth had to work very hard. "These girls," he said, "would see everything." He declared that they dragged him to the top of every steeple, and to the bottom of every crypt, without a shadow of mercy; but the truth was, he was determined they should see everything, and had come abroad with them for the express purpose of being their cicerone.

One after another the quaint old towns of Belgium were visited and explored. Antwerp, with its far famed churches, and the treasures of art which they contain. Bruges and Ghent, with all their interesting relics of the olden time—the bright sunny little capital where Edith declared she spent half her fortune in pretty things. Then they went on to Liége, walked about the old Bishop's Palace, and talked about Quentin Durward. And what was better, so thought the girls at least, than staying in the smoky manufacturing town, they spent two days in an excursion to Namur and Dinant, and had their first glimpse of the beautiful in river scenery, among the limestone rocks of the Meuse.

After another day or two spent at the pretty baths of Chaude Fontaine, and in the picturesque valley of the Vesdre, our travellers reached the capital of the ancient kingdom of Charlemagne, where they rested quietly for a little while. There Miss Neville found her friends, and as soon as they had seen her comfortably settled, Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth, with Edith and Kate, started once more upon their travels.

Two more days of easy travelling brought them to Bonn, and it was on the very afternoon of their arrival in that town that I have introduced them to my reader.

And now I have told as briefly as I well could all that needed to be told of my heroine's past life and history, and have added a few words touching her companions. Henceforth let them speak for themselves!

CHAPTER III.

THE moonlight streamed down in a silver flood upon the broad rapid river of the Rhine, as Edith Vivian sat looking at it from her open window that night.

Such a lovely moon,—so full and brilliant, so clear and calm,—a few fleecy clouds were scattered here and there about the sky; but only specks of clouds, not charged with rain, and they seemed but to enhance and reflect her beauty. The heavens, too, were studded with many stars, but these looked pale and faint by the side of the moon's splendid brightness. She held her place in the heavens, like the queen that she was, and rock and river, castle and crag, were alike bathed in that transparent flood of silver light.

"Moonlight on the ocean,"—'tis the name of a pretty song; the music is pretty, the words are soft and poetical; they are the embodiment of a beautiful idea, and yet an idea which is equalled, if not surpassed, by the reality.

So thought Edith Vivian as she sat there that night in a state of quiet happiness, gazing on and on till her very eyes ached; not indeed upon the ocean, but upon that grand old moonlit river, and upon the glorious scene which the great Creator's hand had spread out before her.

What could Kate have been thinking of that she should have been sleepy on such a night as this? Granted, that they had gone through a good deal in the course of the day; that in the morning they had looked into every corner and crevice of Cologne Cathedral, and done their best to admire the richly-jewelled shrine of the Three Kings which it contains; that they had also twisted their heads into all manner of impossible positions, in order to obtain the so-called best view of Rubens's celebrated picture of St. Peter crucified with his head downwards; that they had, after that, trotted to the other end of the town (over those peculiarly sharp and peaked stones which are so very trying to inexperienced ankles) to the church of St. Ursula, and taken full note of those funny little boxes which enclose the bones of that virtuous lady and her eleven thousand virgins, concerning the true origin of which bones the incredulous of the present day have hazarded such sacrilegious suggestions; that they had subsequently performed a railway journey, eaten a German dinner, and driven to Godesberg and back: granted all this, yet what right had Kate to be sleepy or tired on such a night, and while the moon was shining over the Drachenfels as she was shining then? But right or no right, sleepy she certainly was, and, after many protestations to that effect upon her part, Edith had graciously allowed her to go to roost in the adjoining room.

It was still quite early, though the little party had some time since separated for the night.

Edith herself was not tired in the least. Why should she be? She was young and enthusiastic, and capable of bearing an almost incredible amount of fatigue. She had no thought of sleeping yet, perhaps not for hours to come, certainly not while there was so much that was beautiful to be seen from that open window. The air, purified from the numerous odours of the town proper (which expression one could by no means translate as *la ville propre*), rose from the garden beneath, laden with the perfume of many sweet-scented flowers,—roses, jasmine, and honeysuckle; the songs of the birds had long since ceased, but ever and anon a bat flew past, uttering its peculiarly shrill and piercing cry, and this was the only sound which broke upon the stillness which reigned around.

Edith had taken off her dress, the identical torn dress of the *table d'hôte*, and was indulging in all the cool luxury of dressing-gown and slippers. As Kate had prophesied, poor sleepy Susan had proved to be exceedingly sleepy when bed-time came, and the mistress was far more wide awake than the maid. So Edith, a fine lady in nothing but in name, had despatched her somniferous Abigail to her slumbers, and was about to do Susan's work herself. She was now sitting with needle and thread in hand, intent upon repairing the injured garment, and for this work the moonlight sufficed, for she had put out her candle half an hour before.

Stitch, stitch, stitch. Edith went on perseveringly for a little while; but she was not very notable as a needlewoman, and had never been very fond of work. (N.B. The more credit for her doing it now.) There seemed to be a good many interruptions just then, which 'hindered needle and thread;' her fingers began to move more and more slowly, and her eyes to stray from her work in hand to the far more fascinating view over the Rhine and the Seven Mountains. At last, the whole thing,—hands, work, needle, thread and all,—fell listlessly into her lap, and her thoughts began to wander far away.

Not so very far either. It was but an easy transition from the torn dress she was holding to the person who had torn it; and, with a feeling of perplexity, almost amounting to annoyance, she called to mind the little scene which had taken place in the *table d'hôte* room that afternoon, and of which her torn dress was so distinct a reminder.

She had hardly given the matter another thought up to that moment, but now she could not help thinking about it. How very odd it was that she should have seemed to know that young Englishman's face so perfectly well. It was no fancy on her part; she seemed to see it as plainly now, as when she was standing face to face with him during their brief colloquy; she could have sketched it, as she believed, at that very moment, from memory. It was a handsome face,—a handsome face and a pleasant face, too,—a face which made you feel disposed to know and to trust the person it belonged to. Where had she seen him before?

Then came another thought,—had he or had he not seen her gesture and look of recognition? And if he had, what must he have thought of it? It went sadly against Edith's pride, even yet, to recollect that she had been on the very point of claiming acquaintance with a gentleman who evidently did not know her; and that, too, in a public dining-room, and in a foreign town.

However, it had been done, and could not be undone. Whether he had noticed it or not, she could not help it now; it was of no use fretting herself, and she would think of something else. And so, with that handsome English face for a starting-point, her thoughts began to roam over very dangerous ground, to dwell upon subjects which she generally looked upon as foolish and forbidden. The moonlight to-night must have had a very enervating effect. She felt no strength to resist the promptings of self-indulgence; and, for once in a way, she gave the reins to her imagination, and let it wander where it would.

Away, far away, from the moonlit Rhine, back to England and to Enderleigh, flew her thoughts; back to the time when she had been a little child, and had loved every one who was kind to her, and had been taught to believe that every body would love her in return 'if she were only good;' back to the time, a little later on, when, as a romantic girl, she had lain awake of nights, and woven for herself golden visions of future happiness, and of some *one* who was to love her best of all, whom she would choose from all the world beside, to honour and cherish in sickness and in health, in wealth, or in poverty, some one on whom she might expend her whole heart's treasure of love 'without fear and without reproach.' He was to be a good and Christian man, this hero of her choice; merciful as well as manly, brave, generous, and handsome. Above all, one who would have loved and sought her just the same if she had been a poor governess, instead of the rich heiress that she was.

And these bright day dreams, these golden visions, where were they now? Had they faded and vanished quite away, amidst the clouds of distrust and suspicion which had been so carefully instilled into her mind? Not quite. In spite of her years of training, in spite of all her efforts to gain the mastery over such 'foolish feelings,' the longing was there still; the heart's intense natural longing to be loved. And every now and then, just on such nights as this, that longing would make itself distinctly felt. Only to be checked and kept under by a strong hand: for what could the happiness of married life ever be to her?

Poor Edith! Her part in the old childish compact had been fulfilled, she thought. She *was* good; or, at least, she tried to be; and yet beyond the little charmed circle of dear ones, she must not allow herself to believe that any love shown to her could be quite pure or disinterested. Above all, if she were to marry, how could she ever be sure that her husband had not loved her for her money's sake, whatever he might say? And for this reason she had made up her mind, as I have said before, that marry she never would.

It was very hard to be compelled to distrust her fellow men in this way; but she supposed that this spirit of suspicion was a sort of toll which all rich people had to pay upon their wealth. And yet whenever she thought over these forbidden things, our poor young heroine's heart grew very sad and desolate. And now, as she sat there in the silver moonlight, from beneath her clasped hands the heavy tears began to fall, and Edith Vivian was crying. Why? Just because she was so rich.

Oh, foolish, faithless, Christian woman! Is this the way in which, as a child of God, you teach your spirit to be grateful for the gifts He has bestowed? Some such thought as this must have flashed across Edith's mind; and yet it was the foolishness rather than the faithlessness of her sorrow which seemed to strike her. "How weak I am!" she murmured; dashing away her tears half angrily, and then lifting up her work again she began stitching away with fresh energy.

It was at this moment that Miss Vivian became aware of these two facts; namely, that the fragrant perfume of a fine Havannah cigar was being gently wafted by the evening air across her open window; and also that occasionally, evidently during the intervals which elapsed between every fresh application to the cigar, snatches of a favourite waltz were being performed in a low but musical whistle.

Now, if Edith was a true daughter of Eve, who was—?

> "But once beguiled and ever more beguiling."

I am afraid it must be confessed that she also inherited no small portion of our first mother's curiosity. And, judging upon the principle of the French proverb, 'Il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu,' that the said whistle would never have been, if there had not been somebody near to whistle it, she became suddenly seized with a strong, and perhaps not very unnatural, desire to find out who it was who was thus unconsciously performing the 'Prima Donna' for her benefit. Screened, therefore, as she thought, by the darkness, she did what I am afraid a good many other young ladies might have done if they had been in her place, put her head out of window, as far as she dared, to ascertain if possible who the performer was.

As far as she dared, I say; for she had not gone very far, before she became conscious of the fact that another head was protruded in exactly the same fashion from the window of the adjoining room. And, as at the moment she looked, the other head gave a sharp turn round in her direction, she made a precipitate retreat to avoid the chance of being seen.

But she had seen enough. In that brief

glance she had ascertained, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the face at the next room window belonged to none other than the handsome Englishman who had sat next to her at the *table d'hôte*, and who was destined to be her neighbour in lodging, it seemed, as well as at dinner. That face again! Where *had* she seen it before—for somewhere she had seen it, if only in the land of dreams. It could not be fancy this second time. Every line, every feature, she seemed to know by heart. Those laughing blue eyes and waving auburn hair, the aquiline nose, with its delicately-cut nostril, the short upper lip shaded but not quite hidden by the drooping moustache, the strong well-moulded chin—all were as familiar to her as if she had known him well for years, and yet she could not call to mind the time or place where she had seen the man before. How the sight of his face had startled her again. There could be no peace for her till the mystery was solved, she thought. Certainly no sleep.

All things considered, therefore, it was perhaps as well for my heroine, after she had made this rash assertion, that the solution of the riddle was to take place sooner than she had any right to expect. And this was owing not in the least to her own powers of wit or memory, but to the merest accident of circumstances.

For just then, while Edith was still busy with the thoughts which that glimpse of her neighbour's profile had conjured up, the door of the adjoining room was opened and shut again with a certain amount of noise, and the sound of a manly footstep upon the floor, and the salutation of "Well, old fellow," from the smoker at the window, told her pretty plainly that a second comer had arrived.

"Oh you *are* up, are you?" was the reply, made in a voice which was perfectly audible in Edith's room—a voice not very melodious in itself, but to which a slight dash of Irish brogue lent a certain degree of raciness. "I expected to find you stretched at your whole long length on that large bed yonder, like a lazy rascal as you are."

"Gently there, my good young man, don't be personal, I beg," replied the other in a more languid tone; "but that's always the way with you excitable creatures. If a man does not slave himself to death every hour of his life, you set him down at once as the impersonation of idleness. However, I have just strength left to listen to the story of what you have been doing all day, which no doubt will be fatiguing enough for me, so begin."

"Just like your impudence," was the somewhat irrelevant response. "I must confess though that you were right after all, and I'd better have taken your advice and waited to go till you could go with me, for the expedition has been rather a chapter of accidents on the whole."

"How so?" asked he of the cigar.

"Well, you know the old saying, I suppose; that 'wherever there's mischief, a woman's sure to be at the bottom of it.'

It's true enough of me, I'm sure, for it's always my soft-heartedness that's leading me astray."

"Go on," said his friend, as the other paused.

"Well, you must know that I'd no sooner got on board the boat, (I missed the first one, by the bye, but that's neither here nor there,) than I spied out the prettiest little creature sitting to aft, with the softest blue eyes and the merriest smile in life."

"Male or female?" inquired his companion.

"Why female, of course; do you think I should have taken any notice of the eyes, or the smile either, if she'd been a boy?"

"All right. I might have concluded that she belonged to 'the sex,' as you call it, only you did *not* mention."

"There now, be quiet, will you, and let me go on. You may be sure I soon made my way within ear-shot of her; for, you see, I'd no time to lose if I wished to make acquaintance with the dear little thing; and

I had not heard her speak six words before I felt sure, from a certain roll she gave her R's, which you English are sadly deficient in, that she must be a countrywoman of my own. After that, of course, all was plain sailing; and as I knew the darling would be only too glad to hear her native language spoken in a barbarous land like this, and as—"

"Bashfulness never formed part of Captain Arthur Fitzgerald's composition," put in his friend *par parenthèse.*

"As when it is a question of doing a kindness to any of the fair sex, I can at times overcome the natural timidity of my nature, you mean," said Fitzgerald loftily, "I took possession of a seat which luckily happened to be vacant beside her, and having asked her to lend me Murray, or something of that kind by way of an introduction, I very soon found myself in full swing talking to my pretty little neighbour."

"I have no doubt of it," remarked the other drily.

"Well! she was one of the right sort, and no mistake. It seems she had never been out of her own country before, and as she lives in Galway when she's at home, her ideas of society in general were somewhat limited. She told me she liked every thing on the Continent because it was so new and strange. So I told her a few things which were both *new* and *strange*, gave her some original and interesting information concerning the manners and customs of people in this part of the world, and related to her several legends of the Rhine which are not to be found in Murray. She opened her pretty eyes rather wide before I'd finished, and, I think, she will make the natives of Galway stare a little if she repeats all the anecdotes verbatim when she gets home. While we were on the subject of legends, I told her all I knew, and invented a little more that I didn't know, about the queer little ruin on this side, opposite the island in the middle of the river, where some nun lived; and how her poor young man who had been to the Crusades, when he came back again and found she had taken the veil, built the funny little ruined tower opposite,—only, of course, it wasn't a ruin then,—and used to sit up and watch for her rushlight, or Child's nightlight, or whatever it was in her convent window, on the island every night, till at last she came to an untimely end. And, of course, while telling this pretty story, I did not omit to throw in a few remarks about the constant nature of true love, and all that sort of thing."

"Which 'sort of thing' you carry out so well in practice, by running butterfly fashion after every fresh face you meet," again interpolated the other.

"Well, absorbed in the delights of such discourse, the time went on pretty fast, as you may suppose, and what's more, the boat went on fast too; and the first time I looked up I found to my horror that we'd gone long past the little place on the other side of the river where I was to have got out, and were steaming on at I don't know how many knots an hour up towards Coblentz. I stormed and made a precious row about it, and then if the people on board hadn't the impudence to declare that we stopped at the very place, and that they had rung a bell and called out the crackjaw name as loud as possible, and that it was all my fault for not having paid attention. They would not go back again at any price; so there was nothing for it but for me to go on to the next place they stopped at, (which was no other than the plaguey little castle I had been talking about) and take the next boat back. So I did. Only you see I was put out; and I am afraid dear Ellen (I found out her name, you see) didn't find me quite such good company after that as she did before. She looked a little sad at parting,—poor little girl,—and that was the only thing I had to console myself with during the two mortal hours I had to wait and kick my heels at Rolandseck; for as ill-luck would have it, I was told there had been a great needle, or nebel, or whatever the German word for fog is, higher up the river, and the boats had not started so soon as they ought. There, you need not laugh, you heartless monster; you wouldn't have laughed if you had been there, I promise you."

"I don't suppose I should," was the cool reply; "but then you see I was *not* there."

"Well, at last the boat came, and glad enough I was to see it; and this time I took very good care no pretty girls should be the ruin of me, and so I was soon landed at a little village at the foot of the mountain."

"And once at the foot, it was not long before you were at the top; it's no such mighty matter, after all," remarked his companion.

"If you will have a little patience and wait till I get to the end of my story, you'll find I never got to the top at all," was the answer. "No sooner had I landed than I came across those handsome Spanish girls and their whiskerando brother, who sat next to us at dinner at the Hôtel Disch the other day.

They seemed delighted to see me again, and as they were just going to start for the top of the hill, nothing would do but I must go in their company. Don Whiskerandos looked a little fierce at this arrangement; his blue blood was up, I suppose; but as the ladies wished it, he had to succumb. So I lifted them into their saddles, or the things they called saddles; and as it seemed to be considered the right thing to ride, I also mounted an animal, which was no other than a donkey, and we proceeded on our way. All this time one of the young gossoons in attendance went on jabbering and gesticulating; only I hadn't the least idea what about. The ladies explained to me, afterwards, that I was considered too heavy for the donkey, and he was rudely demanding that I should take a horse instead; the said horse being double price. Now if I'd twigged his meaning, I should very likely have done so; for it 's a good many years since I took my last donkey ride, and I found it precious uncomfortable. But as it was, I took no notice of his request, and it was all his own fault for speaking in such a barbarous lingo that nobody could understand."

"Or rather yours," observed his friend, "for being such a Goth as not to understand German."

"Be quiet, there, will you? and don't be so puffed up with your little superior 'larning.' If I had been in England, and had been such a donkey as to ride upon another, I should have been told by the boys 'to get inside and pull the blinds down,' or something equally pleasant. But German boys, it seems, are more slow and sure in their method of tormenting. I'm as certain as I'm sitting here that the young rascal who had been jabbering at me, did something mischievous to the straps or the stirrups of the animal I bestrode, or else gave him a sly cut 'unbeknown,' for just as we were turning the corner of the hill, where the road was steepest, if the wretched beast didn't make a sudden start to the left, and at the same time my saddle gave a pretty strong hint that it was coming off; so there was nothing to do but to jump for it, if I didn't wish to be deposited in a bed of soft red mud, which was lying quite 'convanient,' and which, after yesterday's rain, did not look inviting. As it was, though I came down on my feet, 'cat-fashion,' I went in pretty deep into the mud, and rather damaged my new trousers, as you may see," he added, pointing rather ruefully to a pair of grey inexpressibles, which were by no means improved by being adorned about the ankles by various streaks of bright red mud. "I should not like to swear to it, but I *think* the ladies laughed, though, poor things, perhaps they could'nt help it; yet it riled me so, that I gave the good-for-nothing boy such a cut with my stick between his shoulders as I don't think he'll forget this side of bedtime, if then. But the mischief of it was that I'd not only damaged my clothes, and made myself look supremely ridiculous, but I'd sprained my ankle into the bargain, and I promise you it hurt me 'pretty considerable.' Walking up the hill was out of the question, and, as I declined to mount my steed again, I sat down on a stone by the wayside, while the others went on to the top without me. It was rather slow waiting. I kept a good look out for the

"Peasant girls with deep blue eyes
And hands that offer early flowers,"

one reads about in 'Childe Harold.' But it strikes me Byron must have been under some rose-coloured delusion when he wrote that stanza, or else the race must be extinct now; for I only saw three short stumpy damsels, with scanty petticoats and stoutish legs, only one of whom was even commonly good-looking, and *she* squinted. By the time the Spanish girls came down from the hill-top again, my foot was so far better that I was able to hobble down to the little inn at Königswinter again, and there we all had a capital dinner together; and after that was over, we sat chatting till we were tired and it was growing late; then they went their way up the river, and I came mine back here. So there's an end of my story, and all I have to remark is this: that, considering what a precious mess I've made of the whole business, I shall take devilish good care not to go anywhere again without carrying you alongside of me to do the '*parlez-vous*' in their —— German."

"You don't swear in my room, or in my company, if you please, Fitzgerald," said the other, in a tone which for its quietness was singularly firm.

"Oh, there I beg your pardon. I forgot your squeamish prejudice on that score. But at least you must confess that I have not transgressed our agreement very much of late."

"I give you all the credit you deserve," replied his friend, drily,—a remark which, unfortunately, might be taken in two ways. "I'm sorry for you, Fitz," he went on in a lighter tone, "for, besides having lost your temper,—"

"I didn't say I lost my temper," interrupted Fitz.

"You implied it, at any rate. I should be sorry to think you gave that lad the cut you talked about if you were quite in your right mind. And, besides having spoiled your trousers,—" he continued.

"I don't know exactly about their being spoiled," again interrupted the other, bringing one of his legs within the pale of the moonlight. "I think they 'll brush."

"I think *not*," said his companion coolly, after having surveyed the leg in question; "or at least I think I shall decline walking out alongside of them when they are brushed. But if you will allow me to finish what I was saying; besides having met with these various misfortunes, and missed the boat and the view, you have missed something else—quite as well or better worth seeing than either."

"Some humbugging ruin, I suppose, that you've stumbled upon," suggested Fitzgerald.

"Anything but a ruin; something in its very prime."

"What *do* you mean?"

"I mean that you should have been at dinner here to-day, and not at Königswinter, for sitting next to me was the most beautiful girl I think I ever saw in all my life."

"English, of course, from your rhapsodies," remarked the other.

"English, of course," was the reply; "and a very perfect specimen of English beauty she was."

Now, the reader must know that every word of the above conversation had been as distinctly audible in Edith Vivian's room, as if the speakers had been sitting immediately beside her; and she, being a young lady of a strictly honourable and upright disposition, had been doing her very best the whole time *not* to listen to what she could not very well help hearing. But now that their remarks had become so personal, she began to feel exceedingly uncomfortable, and resorted to every possible means she could think of, to make her noisy neighbours aware that somebody else was within earshot, who was never intended to hear what they were talking about.

She coughed, she sneezed, she upset a chair, she called to imaginary Kates (I say imaginary, for that young lady was sleeping far too soundly to be thus awakened), but all in vain; the speakers in the next room were far too much interested in their own conversation to hear or attend to any of her manœuvres. She even went the self-denying length of closing her window, in the hope that she might thus shut out the sound of her neighbours' voices; but she found, when she had done this, that they only became more distinct than ever through the thin partition wall, so she opened it again.

She did not feel quite inclined to knock at the bedroom wall and tell them she was there, though this would, perhaps, have been the only effectual method of putting a stop to their confidential *tête-à-tête*. So having satisfied her own conscience by the knowledge that she had done all she could to avoid playing the eavesdropper, she made up her mind to give herself no further trouble about the matter. Only as I said before, although she did not exactly listen, she could not help hearing a good deal of the conversation about herself which ensued.

"What style?" asked the man called Fitz.

"Brunette, tall, and very graceful," was the reply, given in a tone which did not encourage further questioning. To tell the truth, Edith's beauty had really made so strong an impression on his mind that he already half repented having spoken so lightly to his present companion on the subject.

"What's the paterfamilias; for I suppose she has one; or is she travelling alone?" was the next inquiry, in rather a provoking tone.

"Not exactly; a good-looking, white-headed clergyman was sitting next her; her father, I suppose; and opposite were his wife and another daughter. They are all refined, well-bred looking people; but she is something very different from the rest of the family."

"Well; and what was she like to speak to? for, of course, you contrived to make acquaintance?"

"No, indeed, I confess I felt strongly inclined to do so; but, unfortunately, you see, I'm not gifted with quite so large a stock of impudence as some people, and she did not look like a person to take liberties with. Circumstances were against me, too; I hadn't even a chance of passing the salt to her, or performing any other little civility which might have led to more. The only thing I managed to do for her was to tear her dress, by putting my chair upon it; though, to do her justice, she would have hidden the mischief from me if she could."

Edith gave a quiet chuckle. He *had* seen it then, after all; but how little he thought that she was sitting just then so very near to him, with the identical torn dress in her hand.

"Ah, I see, I shall have to teach you a few things still before we part company," continued Fitzgerald; "I can't say you are a very apt pupil, for you haven't made much progress as yet."

"Well, I believe in this case I really shall have to come and take a lesson from you in the art of making acquaintance at short notice; that is to say, if you will insure me against all risk of being thought impertinent, for, from what I heard the mother say, I think they intend stopping here for several days, and, as we may have to do the same, a little agreeable English society would be right welcome."

"Of course, of course; there can be no manner of doubt about that; and if the case is as you say, nothing will be easier than to make friends. Why, man, you have the very means in your hands at this moment, only if it wasn't for me, perhaps, you would not know how to use it. A luxurious nabob like you, who has the 'Times' sent him from England every day, what's to hinder you offering to lend it to the parson papa (at such a time as we have done with it *bien entendu*), and there you have the whole family under an obligation to you at once."

"Not a bad idea certainly," said the other, laughing.

"And warranted free from all impertinence," replied his companion. "By the bye, Harry, talking of papers, how about the letter you waited at home for to-day? Did you get it after all?"

"Yes; by the second post."

"And what news?"

"Not any better. I am not at all satisfied with what Minnie says about my father; though she evidently tries to make as light of his ailments as possible. But that giddiness, and numbness in the arm, which I told you of, still continue; and those are serious things for a man of his age. In fact, I believe he must have had some slight sort of fit, though they have never confessed to it."

"I am sorry your news has been no

better, Hal," said Fitzgerald, kindly; "I was in hopes you might have been more satisfied after to-day's letter."

"Rather the contrary; it has only served to confirm my uneasiness; so much so that I have no heart to think of going further away from home. But it lies heavily on my conscience, Arthur, to be keeping you here, when you would have been in Switzerland long before this if it had not been for me. Sorry as I shall be to lose you, I have been thinking it over in my own mind, and have come to the conclusion that it will be really better for you to start to-morrow by yourself, as it seems so uncertain now whether I shall be able to go further on or not. I could follow you, you know, in a day or two, if all goes right."

Edith heard Fitzgerald walk quickly across the room to the window, where his friend was sitting; and from the tone in which the next words were spoken she knew he had laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"My good fellow," he said kindly, "when

you and I agreed to take each other to Switzerland this autumn, it was to be for better or for worse; and do you think I'm the man to shrink from the bargain? Arthur Fitzgerald's not the man you take him for if you think he is likely to go away yonder and enjoy himself, and leave you here alone, to mope and fidget yourself to death. Besides, on selfish grounds it's not advisable; just see what a precious mess I've been getting myself into only in one day, just for want of your help."

By way of answer his friend drew down Arthur's hand from its resting-place on his shoulder and shook it heartily.

"Fitz, give us your hand, old boy," he said; "you're a trump, as you always were; but I'm none the less sorry for all that."

"What says your father to your proposal of returning home?" asked the other, by way of changing the subject, which was becoming a little sentimental.

"Won't hear of it. Says he shall be very angry if I dream of doing such a thing.

However, I see pretty clearly what he's driving at, and if my next news is not better, I shall be off at once to England, in spite of all he may say to the contrary;" and then he added, rather bitterly, "As if a rich wife were better worth looking after than a sick father."

"What do you mean by that last remark?"

"Why just this,—that Minnie's letter is full of the old story over again; she's for ever harping on the same string; and, ill as my father is, it seems he can send me no other message than to entreat me, if I will, not to go on further, to go back to Aix-la-Chapelle and look after my interests in the matrimonial market, by making acquaintance and paying court to a rich heiress, who happens to be staying there just now. Very much in my line, is it not?"

"And who is this rich heiress, if I may ask?"

The answer was given in four short words. But short and simple as they were, they had the effect of making Edith, in the next room, start up out of her chair as if she had been electrified. She stood still for one moment, trembling all over with agitation and nervous excitement; then she sat down again, very nearly in the same attitude as before. Only there was this difference. Hitherto she had been compelled almost against her own will, to overhear the greater part of the conversation which was being carried on so near her; now she sat perfectly motionless, with her eyes closed and her head bent forward, listening with intense eagerness for every word which might follow.

CHAPTER IV.

"ONE more turn, and I should confess anything." So said our Dutch King William the Third one day at the Tower, when, of his own free will, he had put his hand into the thumb-screw just *to feel what it was like.* The moral of which remark I take to be as follows. That we should be very careful not to judge others to be either weak or wicked, unless we have been tried in the very same fires of temptation, and been found faithful.

Now I do not think there are many persons in the world (I will not say there are none, but I do not think there are many) who, being placed in exactly the same circumstances, would have resisted the impulse to listen, any better than did the Edith Vivian of my tale.

Nor was it likely. Human strength, certainly a woman's strength, could scarcely be expected to be proof against such a temptation as had come upon her. Judge for yourself, reader, if it *was* likely, when I say that in those last four words which her unconscious neighbour had spoken, she had heard her own name distinctly pronounced, and that not as the heroine of the *table d'hôte* adventure, not as Miss Vivian of Enderleigh, but as "*my cousin*, Edith Vivian."

There was the whole riddle solved at once. The mystery which had been puzzling her for hours past, was made clear as the daylight now, and how dreadfully stupid she had been not to have hit upon the truth before.

No wonder she knew that face so well, when she had seen it over and over again in one of Kilburn's life-like photographs, lying on the drawing-room table at Haughton; no wonder that she seemed to know every trick of his manner, and the very tone of his voice, when he was none other than her own cousin, Harry Neville. True, she had not seen him for years and years, but he had scarcely changed at all since he was a boy; and she saw now that he bore a strong family likeness to her uncle Sir Edward.

He had not recognized her in the least, that was self-evident. Nor was this strange either, for she was as much changed since that time when they had met at Enderleigh as she well could be.

For, whereas she had been small of her age then, she was tall now; whereas she had been a child then, she was a woman now; and last, not least, whereas she had been plain then, she was beautiful now. Had not his own lips just said so? And Edith may be pardoned, I think, if she dwelt for a moment with a thrill of true womanly pleasure on the remembrance of his words. No, he had not recognized her in the least, though she knew him so perfectly well now, and only wondered at her previous bewilderment.

It was an amusing state of things, certainly, and Edith, who had as genuine a love of fun and mischief as most of her sex, enjoyed the little 'comedy of errors' which was thus being played out for her benefit, to her heart's content.

She had not much time to think about it just then, for, as I observed previously, her whole attention was absorbed in listening for every word which should follow. She reconciled the dishonourable proceeding to her own conscience as best she could. "How could she help hearing, if they would talk so loud? She had done all she could to stop them, and it was their own fault if they would not take the warning,"—and so on. But to my mind the only real excuse for her conduct was to be found in the exceeding strength of the temptation.

The next remark which she heard came from Arthur Fitzgerald.

"Edith Vivian?" I seem as if I ought to know that name," he said.

"I should think you ought," replied

Harry Neville; "you must have heard it often enough."

"Well, who is she?"

"A sort of cousin of mine, as I told you before, and a ward of my father's, which is more to the purpose. He is always trying to make as much as possible of the relationship, for she is a rich heiress, and has a fine estate somewhere in the New Forest, and something over £6000 a year to keep it up with."

"Is she the Miss Vivian who was *not* in town this season?"

"The very same, who shone by her absence, as the French would say," replied the other laughing. "She is better known to the world of rank and fashion as Miss Vivian, of Enderleigh."

"Well, go on, my fine fellow. I don't see the matter quite clearly yet. What has this Miss Vivian, with her £6000 a year and estate in the New Forest, to do with you?"

"Why, you see," said Neville with a little hesitation in his manner (a hesitation which would have been considerably increased if he had thought that he had two hearers instead of one), "thereby hangs a tale, and it's a long story, if I'm to tell it all; but the gist of the matter is this, that the grandfather of this young lady, and the first proprietor of Enderleigh, was a Neville, first cousin to my father, who succeeded to the title upon his death, as he left no son. And I know very well, from things he has dropped lately, that the Governor has always had the idea in his head that it would be a fine thing to make up a match between my brother George and this said Miss Vivian, and so to bring the estates and the title together again some day. Now, of course, this neat little arrangement has been entirely knocked on the head by George's foolish marriage,—I call it foolish, though I approve of a little romance in the abstract, and thought his wife a sweet girl when I met her a year ago at Allahabad,—still it must be confessed that it is not a wise thing for a man in his position to marry when he has not a *sou* in the world to bless himself with beyond his pay; but poor George had always more heart than brains. However, the news has quite upset my father, and has, I believe, been in part the cause of his illness; and the worst part of it all is, that since George has failed him, the old gentleman has done me the honour to alter all his little matrimonial arrangements in my favour, and is just as anxious now that I should make up to the heiress, as he used to be about George. He is too politic to do more than hint at such a thing, but I see quite clearly what he is driving at, without being told in so many words. Ever since I came home this spring I have heard nothing but praises of this Edith Vivian, till I am quite sick of her name, as if people could talk me into falling in love with her. I am for ever being plagued about its being my duty, as the member of a poor family, to 'marry money.' Minnie has caught the infection unluckily, and is nearly as bad as my father; and the result is, I don't take so much pleasure in her company as I used to do.

"About two months before I came away there was a regular row. It seemed that the lady had graciously signified her intention to come and stay with us at Haughton for a few weeks—a long promised engagement. Of course my father and Minnie were both on the *qui vive*, on hearing this news, and they both began to look knowing and to put their heads together, to see if something could not be made out of the opportunity. I saw through all this plainly, as if they had taken me into their confidence, and foresaw exactly how it would be when Miss Vivian came; she would be thrown on my hands at all times in the day, for entertainment and escort, and my imagination painted in vivid colours the *tête-à-tête* rambles, on foot and on horseback, which would be cleverly arranged for us day after day. But I had no mind to stay at home and play the part of 'tame cat.' So I just took the initiative, and no sooner did I get wind of the matter, than I wrote a line to our old friend, Norman, of the 20th, and asked him if he could have me up at the Lakes at once, instead of waiting till August, as it would suit me better.

“ He sent me back word, to come by all means, and that I couldn’t have chosen a better time for my visit. So you see I had thus stolen a march upon them at home, and by the time the fact of Miss Vivian’s advent was announced to me in form, I was able to plead a prior engagement which could on no account be given up. I had a hard fight to stand my own ground, I can tell you. It was as good as a play to see the long face poor Minnie pulled when I made known my intentions. My father was ready to storm, but he didn’t dare, for that would have showed me too much of his game; but in his own diplomatic way, (I don’t think you know my governor,) he did his very utmost to make me change my mind. However, I never yielded a single inch, and the upshot of it was, that I came off victorious, went to Cumberland the very day before *la cousine* arrived, and spent a delightful month with Norman and his charming family at the Lakes."

Now a good deal of what Harry Neville had been saying with regard to her uncle's matrimonial projects for herself, was by no means news to the young lady who sat listening in the adjoining room; but she had not been prepared for all his revelations concerning the part he had himself played in the proceedings, and they amused her not a little. "So-ho! Master Harry," she said to herself, "I have found you out, and know exactly now how it was that you were *obliged* to go to Cumberland just when I went to Haughton, and I shall know another time just how much to believe about the deep regret you were reported to feel on account of your unlucky engagement which could not be put off." And Edith, as she thought of these things, although she fully appreciated her cousin Harry's spirit of independence, could not help feeling at the same time just a little sorry that he should have considered it necessary to go all the way to Cumberland to get out of her way.

The next remarks she was destined to overhear, were not likely to improve her temper. Hitherto it had seemed as if she were going to prove an exception to the old saying, about 'Listeners never hearing any good of themselves;' but now that she had begun to listen in good earnest, it was only to be expected, I suppose, that she should pay the usual penalty.

"Then you have not seen the lady since your return from India?" said Fitzgerald.

"Not once, nor for years before that. Indeed I don't think I ever saw her but once in my whole life, and that must have been—let me see, about this time twelve years ago."

"Report says she is handsome, does it not?"

"She wasn't then. I remember her as a little fierce, frowning, black-eyed girl, with no end of a temper; but there was something redeeming about her too, I know I thought at the time, though I forget now what it was. You're right about her being handsome, however. I believe she has changed very much in appearance of late years, and is considered quite a beauty now, though not one of my style I should think."

"Why not?"

"Oh I fancy she is as proud as Semiramis, and just about as amiable."

Edith bent her head down upon her arms, and indulged in a long low laugh. In her comfortable old dressing gown and slippers, with her hair falling in loose curls about her neck and shoulders, and her eyes brimming over with tears of merriment, she felt and looked so very unlike a Semiramis at that moment. If Harry *could* but have seen her then!

"Oh, indeed," said Fitzgerald, in answer to his companion's last remark. "And I suppose the meek and mild auburn-haired type of beauty, of which the gentle Blanche Norman is so fair a specimen, is more to your taste—eh, Master Harry?"

"Possibly it is," replied Harry quietly, not caring to provoke a fresh discussion on a subject which had already been worn a little threadbare. "At any rate I cannot say I am as yet in the least *épris* with what I have heard about my rich cousin. She says she never means to marry, but of course that's all bosh. However, to do her justice, I believe she has good points." (It was one of Harry Neville's good points, that he was strictly honest, and gave every one his due). "She spends her money well, and does an immense deal of good on her estate. And at least there is nothing of the *nouveau riche* about her, for all her charities are carried on without the least ostentation, and so quietly, that my father even, who is, or rather was, her guardian, never can quite find out how much she gives away. She is very kind to a poor relation of hers, another cousin of my father's and her grandfather's, who has lived with her ever since her mother's death. This Fanny Neville used to be a regular sour crab in the matter of temper, when I knew her years ago, and must be a difficult person to live with I should say; so it redounds rather to the young heiress's credit that the two should get on together as well as they do. The old lady is troubled with the rheumatics, or something of that kind, and is now staying at Aix-la-Chapelle to drink the waters, and Edith is there with her at this present moment."

"Is she indeed?" observed Edith to herself in the next room.

"And how soon do you mean to take yourself back to Aix-la-Chapelle, to hunt out your fair cousin, and do your father's bidding like a good boy, as you are?" asked Arthur Fitzgerald.

"I?" exclaimed the other, starting fiercely round, and sending the reduced end of his cigar with a great fling through the open window; "I? What do you take me for, man?

You might have known me better by this time I should think. I'm about as likely to go to Timbuctoo as to Aix-la-Chapelle, if that's to be the inducement to take me there. Why, Arthur, I'd rather work for my living with my own hands, or beg my daily bread from door to door, than do such an unmanly cowardly thing as marry a rich woman for the sake of her money. I'd starve sooner."

Once more Edith's head was bowed down upon her clasped hands, and they were no longer tears of merriment but of genuine feeling, which this time rushed unbidden to her eyes. Oh how glad she was that she had heard those last words. There was such a thing as an honest man in the world then, after all!

" There now, my good fellow, don't excite yourself, pray, or you'll suffer for it to-morrow," was Fitzgerald's next observation. " I only said it for to try you, for to tell you the truth I did not think the line of conduct would be much to your taste."

"Well, as you say, it's not worth exciting myself about, certainly; only it happens to be a tender point of mine, and you hit me hard upon it. I even carry my feeling on the subject so far, that I don't think I could make up my mind to marry a rich woman, even if I were head over ears in love with her. I believe I should be more inclined to do as the scorpion, Byron talks about, did—

'Die in silence, biting hard.'"

"Why so?" asked the other.

"Why, you see, when once the romance of the thing is gone off, a man must feel such a mouse under the circumstances,—I mean a poor man like me. Fancy living in the midst of luxuries one has no virtual right to think of or lay claim to, as one's own. Fancy hearing one's wife talk about *her* house, or *her* garden, or *her* horses and carriage, and perhaps *her* husband in the same breath, and in the very same tone; speaking of one as only another part of her property in fact, and I don't believe there are many rich women in the world who would be proof against the temptation of doing such a thing now and then. The slightest approach to such a state of things would to me be unendurable, and would drive me into a lunatic asylum in less than a month. No! rather give me love in a cottage, with a bonnie wife and bairns to work for, slave for if need be, than any such splendid bondage, however richly gilded the chains might be. Besides, too, though I don't care much for the world's opinion, I don't think in such a case as this I should ever quite get over the dread of it, and should fancy that the stigma of a fortune-hunter would cling to me through my whole life long."

"Well, you are a queer fellow, as I suppose you know," said the other, "and if the same temptation were to be offered to me, I doubt if I should be troubled with quite so many scruples of conscience about yielding to it. You are right in principle, no doubt, but allow me to suggest, that as regards practice, I think you carry your independent spirit a *little* too far." And Edith, in the depths of her heart, felt a strong inclination to echo that last observation.

There was silence between them for a minute or so. "What do you say to going to bed?" asked Harry presently.

"'Barkis is willing,'" replied Fitzgerald, "and what is more I shan't be sorry to try the horizontal, for to tell the truth this ancle of mine still hurts me con—I beg your pardon—considerably."

Harry could not help laughing as he wished him good night.

"If you are waking, call me early, call me early, Captain dear," said, or rather sang Fitzgerald, in a kind of recitative peculiar to himself, "and let me advise you against late slumbers in the morning, on account of your complexion."

"My what?" exclaimed Harry, laughing. "My dear fellow, my complexion and I have parted company for many a long day; I have learnt to look upon that as a thing of the past ever since the first season I spent in the torrid zone, some eight or nine years ago; but I shall be up early, never fear."

"Well, good night once more," repeated Fitzgerald, as he left the room and shut the door behind him. In another moment it was open again, however, and his laughing face made its appearance round the corner. "Mind when *it* comes off you don't forget to ask me to the wedding," he said, and then he made a precipitate retreat to avoid the reception of a sofa cushion, which, quick as lightning, was hurled at him from the other side of the room.

Once more the door closed behind him; this time he was really gone, and Harry Neville was left to his own reflections in one room, and his cousin Edith ditto ditto in the other, with only a thin partition-wall, and a few feet of empty space between them.

With those of the gentleman we have but little to do just now; they were sad enough when the excitement of his friend's society was removed, and the recollection of a sick father, and of an uncongenial home rose before his memory; but we will, with the reader's permission, keep Edith company for a few minutes, and learn what were the nature of her thoughts, now that she had at last found a little breathing time, as it were, to reflect upon what she had been hearing.

At first they were those of simple amusement. That she should have been sitting there all that time to hear herself described twice over, and under two such totally different aspects, while those who were employed in sketching her portrait were so utterly unconscious of her vicinity, was, she thought, about as droll and original a combination of circumstances as could well happen to anybody. How little Harry Neville guessed that she, the very last person he would have chosen to overhear what he was saying, was so near him all the while, that if it had not been for those few inches of lath and plaster, she could at any moment, almost without moving from her chair, have laid her hand upon his shoulder, and said, "Look, cousin Harry, and see if I am not a wee bit changed from that proud, fierce, frowning child you saw twelve years ago at Enderleigh." She felt very much indeed as if she had been looking into some sort of magical mirror, and seen reflected in it, not her own very self, but the Miss Vivian whom the world was accustomed to see, and to talk about.

For the time being she had certainly been invested with the power Burns spoke of, when he said—

"Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us."

And what had been the result? What had she learnt that night which she had not known before. Not so very much after all.

Her cousin had spoken the truth about her, but not the whole truth. How could he, when, upon Macaulay's acknowledged principle, he had sketched the broad outlines of her portrait from reality, but had filled in all the minor details from the imagination? He had said that she was proud, and so she was; but he did not know how daily and hourly she struggled against her pride. None knew that but God. He had said that she spent her money well, but he little knew how miserably conscious she felt of having failed even in this respect. She did try to spend it well; but often when she had done her very best, that best seemed afterwards to have been the very worst; and so little by little Edith, like her mother, had learnt to feel her wealth a burden almost too heavy for her to bear. Then again, her cousin had shown her in one short sentence just the value at which the world estimated her resolution of not marrying. "Of course, that's all bosh." But then neither he nor the world could know the grave and weighty reasons which had induced her to make that resolution. And from that she began thinking of what Harry had said of his horror at the idea of marrying a rich woman, and wondering whether many men felt the same, and whether this was the reason why the rich so often mated with the rich; it had always puzzled her that it should be so. And yet she fancied that if ever she should marry,—it was not at all likely of course, she had no idea of doing so,—still, if ever she should marry, and what is more, marry a poor man, she thought it would not be quite an impossible thing to make her husband forget, before very long, that all their united wealth was not his very own. Surely it was a woman's truest joy to feel herself in all things but second to the man she loved, and therefore she thought that it was just possible for a rich wife, rich not only in worldly wealth, but in all a true woman's tact and delicacy, to teach even a poor proud husband to forget that he had ever been poorer than herself.

She had been abroad now for nearly a fortnight with the Wentworths, and she did believe and hope that she had contrived to cheat the rest of the world, and even her own little party at times, into the belief that she was travelling with them, not they with her. It was not her fault, certainly, if they had ever been reminded that it was otherwise. And having had such good success in this case, surely she need not despair of succeeding, even under more difficult circumstances still.

But all this was not much to the purpose, because she never meant to marry, in spite of her cousin Harry having said that "that was all bosh!"

And with this thought all her previous appreciation of the most original and amusing situation in which she was placed returned at once, and she had another good laugh at her cousin's expense. There was but one drawback to her amusement, and that was, that she could share it with no one else. Not even to Kate Wentworth could she tell the tale of what she had heard, or how she had happened to hear it. This was her own secret, and must remain so.

Then came another thought: how should she behave herself the next time she saw

Captain Neville? And it began to strike her that she would find it not a little awkward to meet him again, as she would be pretty sure to do on the following day. At present he had evidently not the slightest idea of her identity with the Edith Vivian whom he had been so freely discussing, and had rather naturally set her down in his own mind as one of Mr. Wentworth's daughters. But how long was this state of things to last? Would it be honest of her to allow him to remain in ignorance of her real name if they should be thrown together much during the next few days, as seemed likely, if they were going to remain in the same hotel? It would not be quite honest, that was certain, and yet she could not make up her mind to part with her *incognito* just directly, and to introduce herself to him in her own true character as the very *bête noire* of a rich cousin, whom he had hitherto so skilfully managed to avoid; more particularly after the remark he had thought fit to make about Timbuctoo. It was so new and pleasant a sensation too to be admired for her own sake, quite apart from any of the advantages of rank and fortune which belonged to her, as she knew from his own words that her cousin Harry did admire her, that Edith may be pardoned, I think, for wishing to enjoy the pleasant sensation a little longer. The truth must come out in the course of a day or so, she thought, with or without her help, and when he found out who she was, she should so thoroughly enjoy his surprise and discomfiture.

After all, she was not keeping him in ignorance for any malicious purpose, only for the sake of a little private fun. And so having settled accounts with her own conscience as best she could, and having wasted a good deal of time in thinking over these things, she made up her mind to hold her tongue about the matter just for the present, and to trust to time and chance to reveal the truth.

By the time she had arrived at this conclusion, she discovered that it was exceedingly late; whereupon she went to bed, and did her best to go to sleep, but in vain. For an hour or two longer Edith Vivian lay tossing about in a very restless and excited state of mind. And it was a little odd, but quite true, nevertheless, that her thoughts during that time should have made a retrograde movement, as it were, and returned to a subject which might have been considered finished and done with some time before. For the last thought uppermost in her mind, up to the very moment when sleep did at length fall upon her weary eyes, was this—

"She says she'll never marry, but, of course, that's all bosh!"

CHAPTER V.

"WELL, girls! what do you say about breakfast?" asked Mr. Wentworth, when the little party had assembled in their sitting-room the following morning. "Shall we have it here, or downstairs?"

"What does mamma like?" asked the so-called girls in return. Edith often fell into the habit of calling Mrs. Wentworth mamma when she was with Kate.

"Mamma likes whatever her girls like," said Mrs. Wentworth with her own quiet smile.

"Oh, then, downstairs by all means," exclaimed Kate and Edith simultaneously; "it is so much more amusing."

And downstairs accordingly they went. The only other occupant of the *table d'hôte* room when they entered it was a gentleman, who was unmistakably stretched at full length upon one of the sofas which was placed along the wall, but who, upon their entrance, by putting one foot to the ground, promptly changed the horizontal into something half way between a sitting and a reclining posture. His face was completely concealed by the outspread front sheet of the 'Times,' which he was holding at arm's length before him; but this screen being removed for one moment as the new comers crossed the room, in that moment Kate recognized the gentleman as Edith's neighbour at the dinner-table the day before, and Edith knew him to be her cousin Harry.

Breakfast was ordered by Mr. Wentworth with English dispatch, but as they were in Germany they had to wait for it for some considerable time, and the two elders of the party having seated themselves at the table they had chosen, Edith and Kate strolled away together to the window to amuse themselves as best they could meanwhile.

Outside, the scene was not very inviting. The windows of the *table d’hôte* room were at too low an elevation to enable them to obtain more than a glimpse of the Rhine, whilst the garden (which lay between them and the river), and everything in it, wore just that shabby look which all vegetation does wear when exposed to the scorching rays of the sun; the turf and flowers seemed parched up by the heat. The side of the garden nearest to the reading-room on the right was comparatively in shade, and within this friendly shelter several gentlemen had ensconced themselves, and were seated in various easy attitudes, for the better enjoyment of their books or papers, which luxuries were in some cases accompanied by the greater luxury of a cigar. But these were not objects of much interest to the young ladies, and although they went on looking out of the window almost unconsciously, they soon began chatting on other subjects.

“I wonder if you are quite awake this morning, Edie?” was Kate’s first remark.

"How dreadfully late you were last night before you went to bed."

"You little audacious creature, how dare you make such an assertion when you cannot possibly know anything about the matter?" exclaimed Edith, laughing. "Why, child, you were in bed and asleep for hours before."

"But that did not prevent my waking up again hours afterwards, and hearing you still up. No, Miss Edith, you had better plead guilty to the charge and throw yourself on my mercy, or I shall report you at head-quarters as being up after hours, and then you will get a severe reprimand. And besides this I have another charge to bring against you, which it is equally useless for you to deny. It's more an infirmity than a fault, and one which perhaps you may not be able to help,—but, Edith, you *do* talk in your sleep."

Edith laughed again. "Do I? Did I last night?" she asked quickly.

"I should think so too, all night long"

(this was a considerable exaggeration on the part of Miss Kate), "at least whenever I was awake," she added.

"Which wasn't often I'll warrant," said Edith. "But, Katie, what did I talk about?"

"Ah, that's tellings," replied Kate, putting on a grand air of mystery, which had the desired effect of making her companion only the more anxious to be told, and also of making her believe that she had heard a great deal, whereas she had in reality heard next to nothing. "No, I shall not tell you anything about it, Miss V.," Kate repeated, in answer to a second entreaty for information on Edith's part, "except that it certainly was not about your aunt Fanny."

"Nor about you either, I daresay, you saucy child," said Edith, speaking in a careless tone, though she was, to tell the truth, a little anxious in her heart as to what the nature of her unconscious revelations during the past night might have been, and here the subject dropped.

"By the way," Edith said presently, "talking of aunt Fanny, I have had a letter from her this morning, and the dear old lady says she has found several friends, and seems to be enjoying herself famously."

"Is she better?" Kate asked.

She says much better, already, and so happy with her old friends that she seems to miss me far less than I had flattered myself could be possible. I expect we shall find her looking quite young again when we go back to Aix."

"How old *is* your aunt?" inquired Kate gravely.

"Well, I never exactly asked her," Edith replied laughing; "it is a tender subject you know with unmarried ladies of a certain or uncertain age. Not more than fifty-five certainly, though she looks more sometimes."

"Especially in that yellow cap," suggested Kate."

"Be quiet, naughty child," exclaimed Edith; "though we may all laugh in con clave at that yellow cap when we see it on her head, I will not have a word said against her behind her back. Know, Miss Wentworth, that for the future I constitute myself defender in general of *les pauvres absents qui ont toujours tort*, she added, with something of the fellow feeling which makes one wondrous kind, as the remembrance of what she had heard about herself last night flashed across her mind.

"But indeed, Edith, I did not say a word against your aunt, and wouldn't for the world, only *that* cap," pleaded Kate.

"Well, even her caps are sacred when she is absent," replied Edith, "though when I am with her I do my best to persuade her sometimes that yellow is not the most becoming colour in the world to her style of beauty."

Just then Mr. Wentworth's voice summoned them to the breakfast-table.

As they turned away from the window Edith all but laughed outright. Her eyes had wandered, almost in spite of her own will, to the sofa, on which her cousin was still extended, in a very sloping position, and where he was still pretending to read the 'Times,' which he held as before in his hand.

I say *pretending*, for he was in reality doing nothing of the sort, but had lifted the paper to such a convenient angle as enabled him to take a good look at the young ladies who were standing at the opposite end of the room, without much fear of being detected in an act which, but for such a protecting screen, would have amounted to a positive rudeness (a delicate *ruse* this, which can also be successfully accomplished with an opera glass). Of course the survey was instantly relinquished the moment the eyes of the objects surveyed came within reach of those of the surveyor; not so promptly, however, but that Edith saw the whole proceeding, though Captain Neville was diligently studying the paper when she passed by his sofa. It was a new idea to her, and amused her not a little, more particularly as she knew from his observations of last night that he was not likely to be hypercritical in his judgment of herself. And so occupied was she with her own thoughts that for some time after she continued quite unconscious of the nature of the conversation which was going on around her, and it was not till she had been called more than once by name that she became aware that her opinion on some matter was required.

"What does Miss Vivian say?" were the first words she heard from Mr. Wentworth.

"That she will give up Mr. Wentworth's acquaintance entirely, if he ever calls her Miss Vivian again," she replied, rather positively, and at the same time she gave a little nervous look behind her, wondering very much whether her name, as spoken by Mr. Wentworth, could have been heard as far as her cousin's sofa. Not that she had any deliberate plan of keeping him long in ignorance of the truth, but she had no mind to let him know it just directly, or, at any rate, in such a fashion as that. She saw in that one glance that Captain Neville was no longer alone. A companion, probably the Captain Fitzgerald of the night before, had joined him; a merry, good humoured, dapper-looking little Irishman, but a very different person in appearance and manners from Harry himself.

"What is my say required about?" she asked a moment after, having convinced herself that her cousin had not been listening to their observations.

"As to what is to be the order of our movements to-day, most pugnacious of young women," replied Mr. Wentworth. "Of course we must see the Drachenfels while we are here, and it remains for you to decide, as soon as your wits have done wool-gathering, whether we shall scale the castled crag to-day, or leave that till Monday, and content ourselves this afternoon with a walk up to the Kreutzberg, the old monastery on the top of the hill near here, where there is a fine view to be seen, and also some queer old monks, who have been buried and dug up again, or have had something strange done to them, which must be exceedingly interesting to behold."

"As far as I am concerned, I am ready for either," replied Edith, laughing; "but as Kate's eyes are only three parts open this morning, and as her dear Mamma seems very tired still, I fancy they will both be more fit for the Drachenfels after to-morrow's rest, and then, if Mrs. Wentworth is able to go with us, we might sleep at Königswinter, instead of returning here; so I think we had better content ourselves with the Kreutzberg and your dear friends the monks to-day."

Kate indignantly denied the accusation that had been brought against her, and declared herself as wide awake as ever she had been in her life; adding that those who live in glass houses should never throw stones. But Mrs. Wentworth confessed to not feeling quite recovered from the fatigue of the preceding day, and, after a little more discussion of the subject, Edith's arrangement was unanimously agreed upon.

"Will you please be so gŭt, as to write your name *ici*?" said the head waiter, from behind Mr. Wentworth's shoulder, in the polyglot phraseology of his tribe, and at the same moment the visitors' book was laid on the table in front of that gentleman, who immediately proceeded to do as he had been requested.

Edith bent forward, and said in a hurried whisper to Kate, who was sitting next to her,—

"Kate, ask your father not to put down my name at all this time—only his own. Indeed that is quite enough, and I don't want to be Miss Vivianed by everybody I meet, or for all the world to know that Miss Vivian is on the Rhine."

But Mr. Wentworth had heard her words himself, and so there was no need for Kate to repeat them. He gave Edith a half-laughing, half-reproving glance, before which her own eyes fell, and then shook his head gravely,—"Mock modesty, springing out of a root of pride, buried deep down in the heart," he said, but he complied all the same with her request.

Edith coloured painfully. It was by no means the first time she had asked him to omit putting down her name, but whatever might have been her motives on previous occasions, she knew that it was something very different from mock modesty, as he called it, which had prompted her to do so now. And as her real motive stood out before her, stripped of all its specious disguises, she recognized in this wilful suppression of the truth something very like an acted falsehood. The thought was too humiliating, and for an instant she felt an almost irresistible impulse to lay violent hands on the book in question, and write her name in her own clear bold characters underneath Mr. Wentworth's; but already the waiter had repossessed himself of his precious volume, and the golden opportunity was lost.

In spite of all her scruples of conscience, however, she was not proof against a certain womanly feeling of satisfaction at the success of her manœuvre, when a few minutes after, the self-same book having been conveyed to her cousin with the self-same request about "writing his name *ici*," she saw, by the aid of a convenient looking-glass, that when that gentleman had finished writing down his own name and that of his friend, he deliberately turned back to the previous page, and read the last entry which had been made thereon.

"The Rev. C. Wentworth and family." This was what Mr. Wentworth had put down, Edith knew, and those few words would not help her cousin much to discover who *she* was. Very likely he might never have heard the name of Wentworth before, as it was not often mentioned at Haughton. So far then her secret was safe for the present, and she went on eating her boiled eggs and unboiled ham with a better relish than before.

"Your new maid has quite won my

heart, Edith," Mrs. Wentworth said presently; "she is so neat and pleasant looking, and what is better, so obliging and apparently conscientious. One of your Enderleigh girls, is she not? If so, she does credit to your school and your teaching."

Edith's cheek flushed with pleasure at the kind words of praise, both on her own and on Susan's account.

"Yes, she is a very good girl," she answered;" she was in my own Sunday class for nearly three years, and was always a favourite of mine."

"By which you do *not* mean to say an acknowledged favourite, I hope," said Mr. Wentworth, sententiously, "or I shall have to take you to task, Miss Edith. But I fancy you are too good a teacher to fall into such an error of judgment."

"When I say that she was a favourite of mine, I mean that she was in my own estimation, Signor Mentor, not that I allowed either Susan herself, or her fellow scholars, to be aware of the fact," replied Edith, giving her head a little saucy toss. "So far I give way to your prejudices; but I hope you don't mean to attack favouritism in the abstract, or I shall be compelled to differ from you in opinion. As long as the world lasts I do believe people will have likings and dislikings, which they would be puzzled to account for, and which spring rather from the instinct than from the judgment. And it is only on this principle that I have ever been able to justify to myself the foolish partiality I have always entertained for your reverence."

At this there was a general laugh at Mr. Wentworth's expense, while he bowed low in return for the equivocal compliment. These little battles of words were of too frequent occurrence between him and Edith to interrupt in the least the general harmony of their intercourse; indeed they rather added to its pleasantness.

"There, Papa, you have had your answer," Mrs. Wentworth remarked. "Now let me go on with what I was saying about Susan. I was so pleased with her on that wet Sunday afternoon in Brussels, when she stayed away from church to take care of me. We talked about the different ways of spending Sunday at home and abroad, and among other things she said quite simply, 'As if any days could be happier than our Sundays at Enderleigh.' I thought the remark spoke well, Edith, both for the girl's own right feeling, and also for your way of managing things at the Priory."

In spite of the commendation, Edith could not help wincing a little at Mrs. Wentworth's words. She was treading on very dangerous ground. Several times the names of Enderleigh and the Priory had been mentioned, and they must have sounded very familiar in Captain Neville's ears, if he had chanced to hear them. But, fortunately, Mrs. Wentworth's voice was not a loud one.

"Susan is going to be married to your gardener's son, Sam Taylor, is she not?"

said Kate; "that nice quiet boy whom I used to tease so last year about his 'taters?'"

"Yes," she is, replied Edith, "a year or two hence; that is to say, if I see no reason for withholding my gracious consent, for I don't think they would either of them dream of marrying without it. It is the best thing in the world for Susan, for Sam is as steady as old Time, and boy as he is, has just that firmness and strength of character which is the only thing wanting about her. I was so very happy when I heard of the engagement, as pleased as if the most delightful thing possible had happened to myself."

"In fact as happy as if you had been going to be married yourself, I suppose," suggested Mr. Wentworth.

"Oh, a great deal more so," retorted Edith; "that state of things would by no means be one of unqualified pleasure, you know, considering it would involve giving up my own independence, which I value very highly. You should ask Susan about her sweetheart, Mrs. Wentworth; nothing pleases her more than to talk about him in her own quiet shy way, and she looks quite pretty with her blushing cheeks. Poor girl! I believe I shall be quite selfishly sorry when the time comes for me to part with her. It goes to my heart to have to administer a scolding to her, as I had to do this morning."

"This morning?" cried Kate, "why what could it have been about?"

"Well, in this case, I believe Susan was more sinned against than sinning," replied Edith; "that is to say, she was made the recipient of a good deal of gossip and scandal, which she ought not to have listened to. But it was an opportunity, which was too good to be lost, for teaching her a wholesome lesson."

"How so?"

"Why it seems she has been making great friends lately with the lady's maid belonging to the Miss Goldacres, those young ladies who sat opposite to us at dinner yesterday—you remember?"

"If you mean the young ladies who asked the other day in the Cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle, whether 'Carlo Magno,' meant Charles the Fifth, I should say the maids are more likely to make friends than their respective mistresses," interposed Kate.

"Now, Kate, you had better not be satirical, or I shall have to rake up some old school reminiscences, about a certain young lady who once told a long story in her historical exercise about one Guy, Earl of Warwick, surnamed the King Maker, who was in some way connected with a round table, and died at last at the battle of Barnet."

"There, Edith, that will do," said Kate, in a subdued tone; "let bygones be bygones, and go on with your story; though I don't think I have ever arrived at a satisfactory conclusion with regard to that gentleman to this day," she added.

"There is not much story to tell," continued Edith, speaking in a low tone; "only from what I have seen and heard of the

Miss Goldacres, I fancy there must be a good deal of the *nouveau riche* about them; and, as usual, their servant has not been slow to find out their little weaknesses. She told Susan a good many things about them last night, which she was bent upon retailing to me this morning; but I stopped her at once, and quite frightened her by saying, that it should be as much a point of conscience with a servant to keep her lips from gossiping about her mistress's affairs as to keep her hands from tampering with her property."

"Well done, Edith," exclaimed Mr. Wentworth, "I had no idea you had so much wisdom. But you were quite right; there is no more fruitful source of mischief than the gossip of the servants' hall."

"And, for my part, I think you have been very hard upon poor Susan," said Kate, pouting. "If I had been in your place I don't believe I should have been able to resist the temptation of listening to her racy revelations concerning the Goldacre family, for racy I am certain they would have been."

"Then you would have been a very naughty child," said Edith; "but hush! here comes the Goldacre *mère*, as forerunner to the rest of the party," she added; and after that the conversation between the two young ladies was carried on in a lower tone.

A gentleman had, in the meantime, crossed from the other side of the room, and was now standing beside Mr. Wentworth.

"Perhaps you would like to look at Wednesday's 'Times,' Sir," he said, "it is quite at your service."

That Edith Vivian, taken by surprise as she was, managed to keep her countenance during this speech was no little credit to her powers of self-control, and she thought the better of herself for ever afterwards. It was no light trial certainly, considering she was behind the scenes, as it were, and knew perfectly well that this offer of the paper was no impromptu act of politeness on her cousin's part, but only the first part of the programme which had been sketched out the night before, between himself and Captain Fitzgerald, for the ultimate object of bringing him on to speaking terms with herself. But, in spite of the quick glance of amusement which Kate darted at her, she never moved a muscle of her face, but went on quietly with her conversation, while Mr. Wentworth and her cousin began discussing the aspect of affairs at the seat of war in the Crimea.

Presently, she heard herself appealed to.

"What was that good riddle you said you heard the other day in London, Edith?" Mr. Wentworth asked, "about the Emperor of Russia and the 'Times' newspaper? I remember something of the answer, but forget the question."

"Only what is the difference between them?" replied Edith quietly, turning partly round as she spoke, and thereby bringing Captain Neville's eyes instantly and in full force upon her.

"And what is the difference?" he asked of *her*.

"One is the type of despotism and the other is the despotism of type," she answered.

"Very good, indeed," exclaimed Captain Neville; "and very true, too, a little while ago, when the 'Correspondents' were so free with their remarks on the Government and the Commissariat, and all existing things; and the 'Times,' of course, as in duty bound, backed them up in all their articles. They have been a little milder of late, I fancy. Perhaps they have discovered that it is not quite consistent with common prudence to allow the enemy to be made aware of our motives and intentions, and what is more, of our weak points, by means of 'Our own Correspondent's' letters, as I am told has been more than once the case. These gentlemen, clever as they are, would have to be more careful if they came amongst us in India, for such licence of the pen would scarcely be relished by our Commander-in-Chief."

There was a moment's pause, and then

the young man turned towards Mr. Wentworth. "Are you thinking of making the usual excursion from here to the Drachenfels to-day?" he asked.

"Not to-day, I think," was the reply. "My wife is suffering a good deal from the fatigue of travelling yesterday and the day before, so the young ladies are going to content themselves with walking to the Kreutzberg this afternoon, and we shall leave the Drachenfels till Monday."

"You will find it as well to do so, if you are not pressed for time," said Captain Neville. "My friend was over there yesterday, and he reports the roads as being in a very bad state after Thursday's rain."

Edith's lips began twitching in a very dangerous fashion, for at the mention of the bad roads her thoughts flew black involuntarily to 'my friend's donkey ride' and all his other misadventures, which she had heard related on the evening before; but just then Mrs. Wentworth rose from the table and moved away, and Edith followed her example; so she was able to turn aside her face until she had recovered her composure.

"By the bye, girls, do you mean to go out this morning? Will you want my escort?" Mr. Wentworth asked, as they passed him.

"Oh, papa, it *is* so hot!" pleaded Kate.

Edith laughed, and then she added, "I believe we shall find the arbour at the end of the garden the pleasantest place for the next hour or two; and I have my last night's sketch to finish, so this idle morning will be a good opportunity."

So saying the young lady left the room, all too soon to please Captain Neville, who began sorely to repent of the inopportune nervousness which had prevented him from approaching the Wentworth breakfast table half an hour sooner. But, at least, he had the satisfaction of feeling that his advance movement, made under the cover of the newspaper, had been so far successful that it had placed him upon speaking terms with the fair incognita; and also obtained for him a very pretty bow from the same young lady by way of leave-taking, and he trusted to his own innate powers of manœuvring to enable him to follow up the advantage before long.

Mr. Wentworth lingered for a few minutes longer chatting with his new acquaintance, and finally took his leave, hugging his 'Times' to his heart, and gloating over it with that keen sense of anticipated delight, which only an Englishman *can* feel who has been deprived of the sight of a paper for more than *two whole days*.

CHAPTER VI.

About the space of an hour afterwards, Miss Vivian, having, as in duty bound, finished her own long answer to her aunt's letter of the morning, was to be seen, in company with Kate, crossing the garden to the little shaded arbour of which she had spoken, overlooking the river.

They were not alone. By their side trotted a faithful and devoted cavalier. *Not* Captain Neville, as the lively imaginations of my younger readers may perhaps have already suggested to them. No! it was a friend of older standing than he—one who has, I fear, been sadly neglected in not having been before this introduced to the reader's notice. A dear friend—a tried and trusted friend—a shaggy friend—in fact, a dog. Rupert, dear old Rupert, Prince Rupert, so called by Edith herself, because she said he was her Prince of Cavaliers, was a Skye terrier of the purest breed. Claiming descent through many generations from some of the highest and noblest families amongst the Skye terrier race, Prince Rupert was an aristocrat, both by birth and education; one of the best, the truest, the shrewdest, the shaggiest of his tribe. Not dainty either, as regarded food or fare; he was far too really high-bred for that, but noble in his instincts, and gentle as he was brave.

If there was one thing in the whole world that Edith Vivian was proud of, it was her dog. The old proverb held good in her case of 'Love me, love my dog'; for any one who chanced to dislike or offend Rupert, was not likely to keep long in her good graces. But then the Prince was a sensible and well-disposed dog on the whole, and the list of his enemies was not large.

Miss Vivian had other favourites, among which, her beautiful bay mare 'Imogen' stood high in rank. But as a lady, and a true lady which she was, she naturally saw much less of her horse than of her dog. Imogen was a very valuable animal too, and so she could not so well boast of her beauty, for fear of being thought proud of her money as well as of her mare. But of Rupert and his priceless worth, she could talk as much as she liked, without running any such risk; and she would rave at times about his sagacity, until the uninitiated were inclined to think there must be something uncanny about the dog.

She valued his affection too, just in proportion to its disinterestedness.

"You would love me just the same," she used to say to him sometimes, "if I were a cobbler's daughter, and had only a stale crust to give you now and then—you know you would, you dear old dog."

She had a theory of her own, to the effect that after the rebellion of '45, and during the Pretender's sad wanderings in the Isle of Skye, one of Rupert's ancestors must have been domesticated in the Macdonald family, and then and there learnt such lessons of fidelity to that sacred but ill-fated cause, as had been transmitted for ever after to his posterity.

"*Fidèle à la mort*," she said, was the only motto worthy of being inscribed on Prince Rupert's collar.

Between Aunt Fanny and the Prince there existed a sort of tacit feud. Miss Neville, not being very fond of dogs, had given him too many sly kicks, and sacrificed too many delicious bits of well-gnawed bones, which he had thought dexterously hidden behind certain garden shrubs; moreover, she had deprived him of too many pleasant naps in the corners of easy chairs and sofas for Rupert ever to forget. And he took his revenge in his own fashion, by running away with her ball of white worsted, whenever he had an opportunity, into the very dustiest parts of the room, and putting himself into all sorts of impossible places for her to tumble over, to the imminent danger of her life and limbs. But there seemed to be a sort of secret understanding between the lady and the dog, that Edith was to know nothing of their mutual dislike, and it was only by her accidentally overhearing her aunt exclaim once after one of these threatened upsets, "I wish to my heart somebody would take that dog and drown it, or he'll certainly be the death of me some day," that she was made aware of the state of the case.

As to Kate Wentworth, she made herself, if possible, more ridiculous about Prince Rupert than even Edith herself did.

Neither of these young ladies would have enjoyed their foreign trip half so much if he had been left at home. Edith would gladly have paid first-class fare for him, if it had been necessary. They took him everywhere with them "to see the views," as Kate said.

And so now, as they made their way through the sunny garden to the cool arbour by the river, Rupert trotted quietly by their side, carrying Edith's sketch-book in his mouth; and when they had finally settled themselves, Edith to her drawing and Kate to her work, he stretched himself at full length at his mistress's feet.

The minutes glided into hours. The sun rose to its highest point in the heavens, and then began its downward course, and still the two girls sat in that shady arbour, busily working and talking.

I am not going to tell the reader what they talked about. They were not ill-natured girls, so they did not talk scandal; neither were they very frivolous, so they did not say much about dress; but, nevertheless, their conversation was not meant for a third person's ears, and so I have no intention of repeating it.

And while they talked, Edith began, and finished, a spirited sketch of the castled crag of Drachenfels, as it stood out in bold relief before their eyes.

Her drawing was like herself, truthful and to the purpose. She had no idea of *wasting* time or labour on this, more than on any other of her employments. A few bold broad strokes, every one of which *told;* a little judicious shading here and there, and then a picture would come forth from her hands, bearing good evidence of her artistic skill. Such a picture as this, was the one of the Drachenfels she had just completed, or rather, had finished as much as she intended to finish it; and it was then handed to Kate, who had been watching its progress, for approval. This was cordially given; but the interruption to their conversation, slight as it was, was sufficient to remind Miss Wentworth that it was growing late, and she began to think that her mother might be wanting her in-doors. So telling Edith that she would fetch her in good time to prepare for the one o'clock *table d'hôte*, at which they intended to dine that day (so as to have longer time for walking in the evening), she left that young lady for a little while alone, or at least to the sole enjoyment of Rupert's society, and made her way back to the hotel as fast as the hot sun would permit.

Then it came to pass that Edith, being thus left alone, took one long critical survey of her sketch, to see if it needed any further additions. Having decided that it did not, she next proceeded to lift it, with the point of her penknife, from its companion sheets of paper in her block sketch-book, so that it might be quite ready for Mrs. Wentworth's acceptance by the time she saw her again.

It was not the wisest possible thing to do, the drawing would have carried much better back to the house in the sketch-book than thus 'unattached'; but she did not give the matter a thought, and after two or three touches of her pen-knife, it was lying loose in her lap.

The 'Clerk of the Weather' must have owed her some grudge, I should say, for just then, as ill luck would have it, the first breath of wind which had stirred either tree or shrub since the dawn, floated past. A mere breath of wind, nothing more; but it was enough to do a good deal of mischief. For Edith, who had stooped for an instant to pick up a pencil which had fallen from her hand, in the next moment had the pleasure of seeing the sketch she had just completed whirling gracefully away in the air, and in the next but one, saw it safely deposited on the towing-path, below the garden.

Not a very long way off, certainly, but still, far beyond her reach.

She sprang up from her seat, letting book, knife, pencils and everything fall, unheeded, to the ground. "Oh, you poor thing, where are you gone to now?" she exclaimed, in a sort of comical tone of despair.

Rupert had sprung up too, and with bristling ears and sparkling eyes, looked alternately from the drawing to his mistress, waiting only like a faithful dog, as he was, for her word of command.

It was given as soon as she saw that eager look.

"After it, Rupert, my staunch old cavalier!" One low joyful bark he gave by way of assent, and then the good dog was off.

The leap was too great for him just where she stood, but the ground sloped downwards a little further to the left. To that spot he raced rather than ran, then, with one spring, one bound, he was on the towing-path,—just too late.

As his feet touched the ground, there came another of those spiteful puffs of wind, and the moment after the little drawing was floating on the Rhine, rolling away at the rate of something like ten miles an hour towards the sea.

The Prince needed no second bidding, nor asked for any further orders for his mistress. Her "After it, Rupert," was still ringing in his ears; there lay the drawing floating on the river, and there could be no thought of peace for that good Skye terrier dog till he had rescued it from its watery grave and laid it triumphantly at her feet.

So he gave but one more short bark, as if to warn her of his intention, and then, without an instant's doubt or hesitation, 'plunged headlong in the tide.'

And she stood and watched him the while, feeling honestly proud of his courageous daring. Very soon he had gained the prize he had in view, and laid firm hold of it with his lips rather than his teeth.

Edith was watching still; she had not calculated at first that her sketch would have fallen into the river, or she might have thought twice before she gave Rupert orders to go after it; but as it was she could not regret what had happened, as it had given her such a good proof of her dog's courage. There were not many she thought who all unbidden would have done so bravely.

He made slower progress now, though she cheered and guided him with her voice.

"This way, Rupert, dear old dog," she said, so proudly.

What ailed the dog? Either he heard not or heeded not, and the only answer he gave to her words, if answer it was, was a long low whine. Still he seemed to swim, struggling fiercely, and yet he made no way at all; rather it appeared as if every stroke took him farther and farther away from her, instead of bringing him nearer to the shore.

What could it mean? She called him again, and again there fell upon her ear, clear and distinct as a minute-gun, that low wailing cry of distress.

All of a sudden the truth flashed upon her. The stream was too strong for him; he could not swim against it. Already the current was carrying him rapidly into the middle of the river to be whirled away—whither? Edith shuddered and dared not think.

Oh the agony of that moment! Why had she not thought of all this sooner, before she sent him on such a fool's errand, knowing as she did that he would have plunged down a very cataract for her sake? And what was she to do now? Must she stand there to the end, and see him lost before her very eyes? It was too dreadful;

could nothing be done? Was there no one within sight or reach, who, out of common mercy, would lend a helping hand to save that brave dog's life before it was too late?

She could do nothing herself; that was the worst pain of all,—to stand there watching her poor Rupert's struggles, and yet feel herself so utterly powerless to help. She seemed almost paralysed with fear, and it was indeed a heartrending cry which broke at last from her quivering lips.

"Oh, Rupert, Rupert, my own dear dog! Will no one save my dog?"

Yes! some one was doing what he could to save him even then; before ever he heard that bitter cry which, telling as it did of a woman suffering, touched him with a strange power and nerved him to do his very utmost in answer to her appeal.

One of two Englishmen—who had been sitting in the garden for the last hour, a little to the left of the arbour—had seen the dog race madly past, had seen him leap into the river, and had known and noted his danger long before Edith had dreamed of it herself. Already he was following where Prince Rupert had led, and, in another moment, with a spring and a leap, as fearless as the dog's own, he had gained the towing-path. Edith felt rather than saw that he was there; her quick instinct told her who it was, though she never turned her head to look. She *knew* that whereas two gentlemen had been sitting on a bench to her left just before, one only now remained; but her eyes never wandered for an instant from that one spot amidst those cruel waters, where her good dog was struggling so hard against his fate; still with that white sketch of hers in his mouth, which he would never let go his hold of, alive or dead.

If she had ever doubted who it was that had gone to the rescue, she would have known for certain the moment after.

A loud voice called out from the garden above, "What on earth are you about, Neville? Are you gone mad quite? You can no more swim against that stream than the dog can."

"I don't mean to try," was the cool reply. Not very comforting words certainly, and yet they brought a strange sense of comfort to poor Edith's aching heart; for they were spoken in just such a tone of quiet power as showed her, without the shadow of a doubt, that though he had no mind to fool his own life away, Harry Neville was not the man to stand by passively, and see that brave dog die.

After that, she never spoke or screamed again, for she felt perfectly confident that if anything *could* be done to help her dog it *would* be done, and so she stood quite still with her hands clenched tightly together waiting as patiently as she could to see what the end might be.

One, two, three seconds, which seemed like hours to her in her intense anxiety, and then a little boat, which had been lying close up against the bank beneath the towing-path, was loosened from its moorings and shot out on to the broad river.

Urged on by the bold strokes of a skilful rower, and aided by the swinging headlong tide, it was in the middle of the stream and by the side of that dark speck which was to be seen upon the surface of the water, almost before Edith could have believed it possible. Just, *only* just in time. Poor Rupert's struggles were becoming gradually fainter and fainter, and that low whining cry, which so wrung his mistress's heart with pain, had all but ceased; still it was in time.

One more moment of agonizing suspense, and then Edith saw a shower of spray-drops glisten like a rainbow in the sun, as one of the oars was thrown quickly out of hand; she just saw that a strong arm was outstretched, and something dark and dripping lifted or rather dragged into the boat; and then she saw no more, and it was only a loud joyous shout from Arthur Fitzgerald on the shore, and another less loud, but not less joyous, from Harry Neville in the boat, that told her for certain that her dog was safe.

She saw no more, because the blinding

tears had come so fast, now that the danger was over, and shut out all other things from her sight. The reaction of grateful joy was almost more than she could bear, and for the next few minutes Edith fairly hid her face in her hands and indulged in the feminine luxury of a good cry.

Meanwhile, Captain Neville was making the best of his way back to land; but, like Rupert, he found this a more difficult matter than to get into the middle of the stream. Unlike the poor dog, however, he had a strong pair of arms, and a strong pair of sculls, too, to help him. Many an hour's early practice on the Avon stood him in good stead now. And so, at last, the landing was accomplished, and he and Rupert stood once more on *terra firma*, though at a point considerably nearer to Cologne than the one they had started from.

It was beyond the reach of Edith's eyes, even if she had been looking that way, which she was just then incapable of doing, and so she never saw how her dog sprang to meet her, how he made his way across the intervening space, so swiftly that his feet hardly seemed to touch the ground. She never knew, indeed, how near he was, till she heard once more his low joyful bark as her drawing was laid triumphantly down at her feet, and 'a moist unpleasant body' leaped up violently against her, and commenced a performance of barks and bounds, in such a state of exuberant delight as perhaps was never seen before. And then Edith Vivian knelt down, and, for the first time in her life, she kissed her dog between his eyes.

Harry Neville made his way back much more slowly than Prince Rupert had done.

From the towing-path he could just see the meeting of the two friends, and he lingered for a moment to watch the pretty sight, not without a certain feeling of satisfaction at having been the means of bringing about the same; then he retraced his steps in a very nonchalant manner, looking as if the exertion of walking across the garden, in that noontide heat, was too much for him, and feeling as if he would far rather have had to face an unmasked battery, than to stand there and receive the harmless fire of a lady's thanks.

He made straight for his old seat, where Arthur Fitzgerald was waiting to welcome him, and looked as if he intended to take his place there again quietly without saying another word. But it was not in Edith's nature to let him so escape. She came forward as soon as she caught sight of him, nearer and nearer, until he could not choose but see her, with her hand extended, her cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkling with excitement in spite of the mist of tears which still hung about them, looking like a very queen in her noble beauty, and yet like a true woman in her graceful timidity.

"Thank you for saving my dog," she said; "you could hardly have rendered me a greater service."

He took her offered hand.

"Indeed you have no need to thank me,"

he answered simply. "I could not have done otherwise; it was only an act of common humanity." But as he spoke, he held the trembling hand she had given to him, a moment longer than 'common courtesy' required.

And so they stood there together, these two cousins, hand in hand; *she* knowing him all the while to be her cousin, but he only knowing her to be the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in all his life.

He was looking flushed and nervous, far more so now than Edith did herself; and when those first words had been spoken between them, there came an awkward pause, and the next appropriate observation did not seem readily to suggest itself to either of them. But then the good Rupert came to the rescue of his preserver, and proceeded to testify his sense of gratitude in the best 'dog' language he could command, overwhelming Captain Neville with the same riotous attentions he had before been bestowing upon his mistress.

"Well, old fellow, so you want to say 'thank you,' after your own fashion, do you?" said Harry, who was not sorry for the excuse to stoop and caress the highly honoured favourite. He took Rupert's head between his two hands, and surveyed the hairy face thus brought into view with a critical eye, and evident admiration, Rupert's tail wagging gloriously all the while.

"What a splendid dog it is!" he said presently; "no wonder you are proud of him."

"Yes, he is a fine dog," Edith answered quietly, but looking at Rupert in the meantime in a way which Captain Neville quite understood to mean that she thought him the very finest dog on the face of the whole earth.

"He comes of a good race. I have known something about his ancestors for three generations, and am acquainted with a good many of his brothers and sisters at the present time," she added, with a funny sort of little smile, for just then the thought struck her that she knew a good deal more of somebody else's ancestors, and brothers and sisters than he had the least idea of.

Further conversation followed upon this on the subject of the Prince's antecedents, and his many noble and excellent qualities, Captain Neville proving himself by no means a sceptical or uninterested listener. And after that he indulged himself and the dog with a game of romps, which, if he had given himself time to think about the matter, he would have considered far too much of an exertion on so hot a day. And all this time Edith looked on quietly, but well pleased at the notice bestowed upon her favourite, now and then stealing little furtive glances at her companion, and thinking in her own mind how very unlike he was (except in face) to his father, Sir Edward Neville; how very unlike he was to his little dumpy, good-natured sister Minnie; how very unlike he was, indeed, to anybody she had ever seen in her whole life before.

But in course of time the game of romps came to an end. Harry could not go on talking to the dog for ever, and it became necessary for him to talk a little more to the dog's mistress. This proved, however, to be more up-hill work than he could have believed possible, and the conversation between them languished strangely. The truth was, Edith was not quite herself, and her manner showed the constraint she was feeling. She felt as if she were sailing under false colours; treading, as it were, on unsafe ground, while she stood there talking to a man whom she knew to be a near relation, yet who had no idea himself of their relationship. Nothing could have seemed easier *in theory* than to have said to him, "Captain Neville, I am your cousin Edith, and I really am very much obliged to you;" but to carry the theory into practice now that the opportunity was offered to her of doing so, was more difficult than she could well have credited. To keep back the truth, however, was scarcely in accordance with her own notions of right and wrong, and made her feel shy and uncomfortable; and when she did speak, it was in a nervous, preoccupied sort of way, which did not help on the conversation.

Captain Fitzgerald, finding himself no longer wanted, had gone back to the hotel, and it was with no small sense of relief, therefore, that Edith presently descried the flutter of Kate Wentworth's blue dress amongst the trees at the other end of the garden, as that young lady came rapidly towards them. Of course Edith had to tell her of the untoward event which had occurred during her short absence, and she grew quite eloquent while describing Rupert's danger and "this gentleman's extreme kindness."

Kate showed a proper amount of sympathy, but did not seem so alarmed or shocked as Edith had expected. When a peril is past and gone, it is sometimes difficult to realise from mere description how imminent it was at the time; but at least Miss Wentworth did not come much behind her friend in her gratitude to "this gentleman" for his most opportune assistance.

Harry had to bear it as well as he could, but he grew very hot and uncomfortable while thus compelled to listen to the singing of his own praises; and he was not altogether sorry when Kate chanced to remember that she had come out for the express purpose of fetching Edith, in order to get ready for dinner. Then they all turned homewards in company.

I suppose Captain Neville was one of those persons who hold the theory that 'taking is no stealing,' when the object taken has been discarded as utterly valueless by the rightful owner, for this fact is certain, that, just before they had reached the hotel, he made some flimsy excuse for leaving the ladies and returning to the arbour they had just vacated. Giving one hasty glance round, to see that no one was watching, he then picked up and unfolded with the utmost reverence and care a sheet of torn and crumpled paper, which he had seen Edith, in the course of their conversation—probably from pure absence of mind—crush together in her hand, and then throw away, and which was nothing less than her own sketch of the Drachenfels, which had been the very cause of poor Rupert's danger. He put it carefully into his breast pocket, and walked slowly back towards the house. Probably he wished to keep it as a reminder of the *dog's* noble conduct that day.

The loud *table d'hôte* bell had finished ringing for some little time, and a large party were already seated round the dinner-table, when Harry Neville and his friend entered the room.

Now, be it known to the reader, in the strictest confidence, that these two Captains, Neville and Fitzgerald, had signified their intention, in the morning, of dining at the five o'clock *table d'hôte*, as usual.

For some reason, however, their plans had undergone an alteration within the last few minutes. What that reason might be, I am not at liberty to say, but I have a shrewd suspicion, nevertheless, that the two gallant officers felt themselves not a little aggrieved and disappointed when, upon entering the room, they were marshalled by the head waiter, *not* to the seats they had occupied on the preceding day, but to others at quite the opposite end of the table, very far removed from the Wentworth party. And from this remote position it was only by scientific dodging between two flower-vases and a high pyramid of fruit that Harry Neville could occasionally obtain a glimpse of Miss Vivian's 'back hair.'

CHAPTER VII.

POPPLESDORF! What a name it is! No one who has once heard it is likely to forget it, and no one who has once seen the place the name belongs to is likely to forget that either.

The old château, once an Electoral palace, is now used as a branch of the Bonn University for the exhibition of cabinets of natural history. There is a straggling village of the same name just outside the castle walls, said to have been called after Publius, a Roman general; and last, not least, there is a long avenue called the Popplesdorf Allée, which leads both to the village and the château, and made up of chestnut-trees so tall, so straight, so regularly planted that they put one strangely in mind of the toy trees in a Noah's Ark.

Very long it is, this Allée of Popplesdorf; interminably long it seems to the traveller who starts from Bonn on a sultry day to visit the monastery of the Kreutzberg, where are to be seen the so-called sacred staircase of Pontius Pilate, and also the shrivelled but undecayed remains of several old monks who are lying there now unburied, though they died hundreds of years ago. It is very dusty, too, and very hot at times, in spite of those tall chestnut-trees, which ought to give better shelter than they do; and very hot it was about half-past five o'clock on the same day, when Mr. Wentworth, with his daughter and Edith Vivian, started for their afternoon stroll to the Kreutzberg, to see the sacred staircase and the mummies of the said old monks.

It being late in the month of August the sun was already low in the western horizon, but although his reign for that day was so nearly over he seemed determined to make the most of the little time still left to him, and poured forth his now horizontal rays with a lavish generosity which might well have been dispensed with.

The fierce scorching flood of light came straight between the trunks of the trees on to the path below, and on to the devoted heads of our pedestrians, making the dusty roads look doubly dusty, and the inviting seats ranged on either side of the avenue doubly inviting. But little cared either Mr. Wentworth or Edith for the dust or the heat; on they went at a steady swinging pace; the one talking gaily as she walked, as though she belonged to some superior race of beings to whom scorching sun or blinding rain were alike immaterial, the other with his martyr-like spirit braced up for the occasion, and, to use his own words, strong in the one heroic wish to do his duty.

But what between Edith's indifference to physical discomfort, and Mr. Wentworth's devotion of self-sacrifice, poor little Kate came badly off. She tried to keep step for a little while, but very soon a certain inferiority of inches on her part began to tell, and she let go her father's arm and trudged along as well as she could in single blessedness by his side. Poor little woman! no wonder even her stout heart failed at the thought of what was before her. That dreary long avenue of trees, of which she could not even yet see the end, but which as far as she could see was all bathed in the same glorious sunshine, and then the stiff piece of climbing which she knew *must* come beyond before they could reach the hill, on the very summit of which the old monastery is perched. She bore it all bravely, however, and without a murmur; was as calmly cheerful as under the circumstances could possibly be expected; only when they came to the end of the avenue, and to the very last wooden bench, and she saw that the other two, intent upon their conversation, never even seemed to notice that it *was* the last, and would have gone on in their steady march without a moment's halt, then her courage gave way all at once, and she fairly cried for mercy.

"Oh, papa! Edie! for pity's sake do sit down one minute; we've plenty of time, and it is so hot."

Upon this they did sit down, and there was a great laugh against poor little Kate. Once seated, however, the curb once loosened which had hitherto restrained his inclinations to their proper channel; the Rev. Charles Wentworth looked very much as if he were anchored there for the rest of the evening. The minutes slipped away; almost a quarter of an hour had passed, but he made no indication of moving again. Even Kate herself volunteered the information, "that it was quite time for them to go on now, if they wished to be home before bedtime;" and more than once she started up of her own free will and made pretence of proceeding to the Kreutzberg alone, I suppose in the hope of rousing her dilatory parent by the force of good example; but still he sat there very composedly.

It was when returning from one of these little impromptu excursions, that the young lady suddenly 'became aware of a walking pair' who were advancing towards them at a pretty smart pace, and were now to be seen somewhere in the middle of the Popplesdorf Allée, about half-way between them and Bonn. There was not an instant's doubt in her mind as to the identity of these new comers.

A certain suit of cinnamon brown, surmounted by a jaunty wide-awake hat of the same colour, together with the peculiarly easy and well bred carriage of the person inside the cinnamon suit, proclaimed the taller of the two, without a question, to be Captain Neville. There was a soldierly bearing, too, about him, as, indeed, there was about both, which could not easily be mistaken. His companion was arrayed this evening in garments of what is technically called "pepper and salt" mixture; the muddy ditto of the previous day having been found upon a close daylight inspection to be very 'sad coloured' indeed, and pronounced 'unfit for human wear.'

Kate quickly recognized both the suits and the wearers, and her laughing eyes sent telegraphic information of their approach to Edith. That young lady bent forward for one moment to assure herself of the fact, and then leant back again, looking half provoked and half amused. Mr. Wentworth, of course, did not see the gentlemen until they were close upon him (elderly clergymen under such circumstances very seldom do); then he started up with pleased surprise to welcome Harry Neville, and inquired if the latter had received back his paper safely, which he had sent to him by the hand of a waiter some hours ago.

Harry answered in the affirmative, and trusted Mr. Wentworth had not hurried himself over its perusal. "A warm afternoon," he added, a moment after, as coolly as he could.

"Warm it is you call it?" exclaimed Arthur Fitzgerald. "Faith, and *I* call it hot." And very hot the poor victimized son of Erin did look, as he stood there in the scorching sun, gasping for breath, and with his pocket-handkerchief doing brevet duty as fan, or otherwise, as his case required. "'Pon my word, Neville, my good fellow, if I stay with you much longer, it's a poor skeleton only you'll be taking back to England. Your pace has been tremendous ever since you turned that last corner."

Harry Neville turned very red. He looked, and I am sorry to say felt, at that moment as if he would have liked to have smothered or otherwise extinguished his unlucky companion on the spot, whose last named indiscreet observation had certainly had the effect of acquainting the other trio with a fact which he had intended studiously to conceal, namely, that their present meeting was the result not of accident but of design. Now he had simply to give up his case as hopeless, and prepare himself to put as bold a face as he could upon the matter.

The real truth was, that the gallant captain had been rather 'out in his reckonings.' Ever since he had heard the Wentworths discussing their plans in the morning he had cherished the idea that such a meeting as the present one would not be impracticable. If they went to the Kreutzberg in the evening, he did not see why he and Fitz shouldn't go there at the same time. Only, 'conscience which makes cowards of us all' had made such a coward of him upon the occasion, that he had no heart to come forward honestly and propose that they should join company, and walk there together; so he was compelled to resort to much more ignoble expedients to effect his purpose. He and the too yielding Fitz had sat in a sunny but secluded corner of the front garden of the Hôtel de Bellevue, keeping watch with eager eyes, until at last they saw the innocent victims of their plot emerge from the hotel, cross the same front garden, and start for their evening walk.

Then it was that the little mistake in Captain Neville's calculations took place.

He allowed a quarter of an hour, and even more, to elapse for appearance' sake, before he and Arthur attempted to start in pursuit; thinking, no doubt, that in the warmth of that August afternoon the ladies would only stroll on very leisurely, and little dreaming of the amount of energy and resolution of which those gentle creatures were capable when the occasion was supposed to require it. When, however, they turned into the Popplesdorf Allée, and even his quick eye could discern no symptom of the game of which they were in chase (namely two blue muslin dresses, and particularly pretty brown hats), he began to fear that after all the object of his present little excursion might be ultimately defeated, and then, as Fitzgerald had expressed it, the pace became tremendous. Presently he caught sight of Kate standing in front of the bench on which the others were sitting. At this welcome sight he slackened a little, but not in time to restore poor Fitzgerald's shortened breath or heightened colour. As far as regarded himself he would have carried the matter off with much coolness and self-possession, and perhaps have cheated *Mr. Wentworth* into the belief that a happy chance had brought them to that spot together, had it not been for Arthur's unlucky and most uncalled for observation. So there was the schemer fairly caught in his own trap, and well he knew that a considerable amount of 'chaff' would be heaped on his devoted head by these two young ladies in the brown hats at the first favourable opportunity. On the whole, however, he bore his misfortunes pretty bravely, and for the time being Kate proved merciful, and good-naturedly came to his relief.

"I can feel for you," she said, turning to Fitzgerald, "having been in a similar case myself. These tall friends of ours seem to forget that in some instances though

"It is excellent to have a giant strength;
'Tis tyrannous to use it like a giant."

"My dear Kate," interposed Edith, in an under tone, and with eyes very wide open;

"have you remembered all that ever since you were at Mrs. Mordaunt's? How very good of you!"

Kate gave her head an indignant toss by way of answer. Meanwhile the two gentlemen both stood watching her; Harry, with a half-grateful, half-patronizing look, thinking her no doubt much younger than she really was, and Fitzgerald, with an air of unmistakable devotion, for his very susceptible feelings were already touched, and he began to feel premonitory twinges indicative of the fact that the little blind god was, as usual, at work at his heart.

"That's a pretty piece of poetry," he said, addressing Kate; "Lalla Rookh, isn't it? There's nothing like Tom Moore after all."

"Gently there, my good young man," exclaimed Harry Neville, as soon as he had recovered after the general laugh which this particularly Irish speech had occasioned. "Making every allowance for your patriotic feelings, I really cannot allow you to take such summary possession of our own old Will's beauties. It puts me in mind of a story I heard the other day of one of your countrymen, who upon being contradicted in his assertion, that Shakespeare was an Irishman, exclaimed angrily, 'Well, I suppose you'll be for making out next that Beaumont and Fletcher *was an Englishman*.'"

There was another laugh at this, in which (to his credit be it spoken) goodnatured Fitz joined as heartily as any one; and then, as if by general consent, Mr. Wentworth and the two ladies rose, and the whole party walked slowly on towards the Kreutzberg.

The path was tolerably wide just there; but however wide it might be, it was not likely they would proceed all five abreast, like a regiment of soldiers.

Kate instinctively laid her hand upon her father's arm, and Arthur Fitzgerald kept guard upon the other side. By this arrangement Edith and her cousin Harry were left to their own devices, and found themselves walking side by side a few steps behind the others. It was not exactly a position Edith would have chosen for herself perhaps, if she had been asked, but its having been chosen for her, as it were, of course made a great difference.

Kate's Shakespearian quotation had given a poetical turn to the conversation, and Harry Neville's first remark was on the same subject. "To which do you give the preference?" he asked of his companion, "to the poets of the present day, or those of the last generation, such as Byron, Wordsworth, etc.?"

"Nay, that is hardly a fair question," Edith answered, smiling as she looked up at him—for tall as she was she had still to look up; "you must tell me, before I attempt to answer it, whom you mean by the poets of the present day, for their name is Legion."

"There you are right indeed—at least the number of verse makers is great—and if poetical feeling is the test, I suppose the number of *true* poets, persons who may perhaps never actually have perpetrated a line of poetry in their lives, is great also—greater perhaps than it has ever been before. But to begin with those in high places. The Laureate for instance—what do you say about Alfred Tennyson?"

Thereupon the Laureate's merits and peculiarities were discussed between them for a few minutes, with a certain amount of impartial admiration and intelligent criticism, but without any of the blind idolatry with which it is too much the fashion in these days to regard *every* production of his genius.

From Tennyson they branched off to Macaulay.

"By way of contrast to 'In Memoriam,' what think you of the 'Lays of Ancient Rome'?" Captain Neville asked of his companion.

"Oh, they are beautiful, most beautiful!" she answered enthusiastically. "It would not be right, I suppose, according to the critics, to speak of Macaulay as a poet in the same breath with Tennyson; but I do so delight in those glorious lays. 'Horatius,' for instance, what a noble spirited poem that is."

"Yes, indeed," exclaimed Neville; "I never read it without fancying I see the whole scene before me. The straight path where—

'A thousand
Could well be stopped by three;'

the desperate fight and fierce slaughter by the little bridge, so bravely kept by its dauntless guards; then the headlong plunge into the swollen river. You remember the part I mean?"

He began quoting line after line, and led her on by degrees, till presently Edith in her turn (and to her great surprise when she came to think of it afterwards) found herself repeating word for word the passionate address of Horatius—

"Which he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome."

But she came to a sudden stop in the middle of the verse. It was something so very new for Miss Vivian to find herself thus quoting poetry in broad daylight, and after rather a dramatic fashion, for the benefit of a comparative stranger, and altogether a departure from the dignified demeanour she generally maintained in gentlemen's society, and the consciousness of having been betrayed into a somewhat greater degree of excitement than the occasion warranted made her colour rise rather painfully. But the blush was very becoming, and she had looked so handsome with her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, while the poetical fever was strong upon her, that Harry Neville felt quite sorry when her quotations came so suddenly to an end.

"The next lines are beautiful too," he said, diplomatically; "do you not remember them?"

"Yes, quite well," she answered more carelessly; but she did not offer to oblige him by repeating them.

"You are an ardent admirer of Macaulay, I can see," he said presently, finding his ruse was not likely to be successful.

"Indeed I am; I cannot help it. Who *can* help admiring his *genius* at any rate, though one may not always agree with his opinions? I heard him called a 'mannerist' only the other day; and I could not help retorting that I thought his was a mannerism which everybody would only too gladly copy if they could."

"You are a warm advocate certainly," said her cousin, smiling; "it would be worth while to have one's reputation assailed, if you would only promise to defend it."

"I believe I am a little too fond of argument for its own sake," she replied, blushing again under his admiring gaze. "I get scolded for it as a bad habit at home sometimes. And there are times when I find myself arguing almost against my own principles, for I am always tempted to take my stand on the weaker side, whichever that may happen to be."

"I suppose every generous mind feels that inclination at times," Captain Neville said; "though it may not always be wise to yield to it. But I would rather have to deal with such 'pugnacious' people any day than with those amiable and uninteresting—I am almost inclined to say, untruthful—persons, who never have an opinion of their own, but agree with everybody else, for the sake of peace and quietness, as they say. But to return to Macaulay and his faults—if you will allow that he has any. What have you to say, for instance, in defence of his habit of exaggerating and even inventing facts; or at least drawing largely upon his own imagination, for the sake of producing a striking picture; romancing, as it is called?"

Edith gave a sort of half-sigh.

"It is true, he does this at times," she said, "and I cannot defend it, though he tries to do so himself in one of his essays; for I suppose anything approaching to a falsehood is a fault, and a grave fault, in an historian. Yet after all, when such highly-coloured pictures are not actually inconsistent with truth, I think they are a great help to the memory. I doubt if I should have remembered there ever was such a person as poor John Temple, or that he drowned himself in despair, when the news of Richard Hamilton's treachery reached his ears, had not Macaulay in a few short lines given so pathetic a description of his dying moments. Then again, in those matchless essays upon Clive and Hastings, how much of beauty and interest would have been lost, if he had contented himself with a simple narration of facts, and had omitted all those glowing details which make our very hearts burn as we read. Who that has once read that glorious description of Westminster Hall, on the first day of Warren Hastings's trial, and of the noble company then and there assembled of 'culprit, accusers, advocate, judge,' could bear to see it robbed of a single word?"

"No, indeed! it is a splendid piece of writing; I should be inclined to think those two or three pages are as fine as anything in the English language. *He* says the place was worthy of the scene, and, *we* may add, the writer was worthy of the subject. But don't you think that besides that fault of his, of drawing rather largely upon his own imagination, he sometimes leaves a little too much to the imagination of his readers?"

"Perhaps so. I am afraid the very superficial way in which he sometimes alludes to even important events, is hardly consistent with what he calls 'that much abused term, the dignity of history.' He has the merit or demerit, in company with Carlyle, of supposing that his readers are previously well acquainted with the subject he writes upon. But after all, if this be a fault, it is one which is very flattering to their intelligence and information. I for one, cannot find it in my heart to condemn him for it. There is something to me both original and fascinating, for instance, in the way in which he often alludes to persons, not by their names, but by some place or circumstance connected with their lives."

"How do you mean? please explain!" said Captain Neville, though he knew pretty well what she alluded to, and only asked in hopes of provoking further quotations.

"O you must know what I mean," she answered. "No one who reads Macaulay, with any moderate amount of observation, can well avoid noticing this peculiarity in his writing. It is not easy to remember a good example at a moment's notice, but one at the end of his essay upon Moore's life of Lord Byron will serve my purpose. Speaking of the dangers of early success and prosperity, he says: 'Two men have died within our recollection, who, at a time of life at which many people have hardly completed their education, had raised themselves, each in his own department, to the height of glory;' and then, instead of saying Byron and Napoleon, he simply adds, 'one died at Longwood and the other at Missolonghi."

"Yes, but then this propensity, flattering as you call it, is capable of just the contrary effect upon the reader's mind, if he does not happen to be well informed upon the subject in question. I recollect puzzling once for a long time to make out who Macaulay meant by the 'poet of the rocks of Meillerie,' feeling myself very small all the time, until I learnt quite by accident, one day, from Murray's 'Switzerland,' that Rousseau lived at Meillerie for many years."

Edith laughed. "I can perfectly sympathise with your feelings in the interim," she said, laughing. "Perhaps it is this peculiarity of his," she added, a moment after, "that makes me appreciate Macaulay even more as an essayist than as an historian; that is to say, if preference is possible, where the claims to admiration are so nearly balanced."

"I see you will not suffer even a shadow to rest upon your favourite author's fame," said Harry Neville, laughing. "Once more let me repeat, you are a generous advocate, and tempt a man to be jealous of Macaulay for more reasons than one. You must have read a great deal, and read to good purpose too. May I make bold to ask," he went on in the same light tone, "if you have followed the example of so many ladies in the present day, and studied at all with your brothers?"

Edith winced, as if with pain, and her cheek grew suddenly pale. "I have no brother *now*," she answered very sadly.

Her companion noticed her changed tone, and the slight stress she laid on the word now, and inwardly anathematized his own impertinent curiosity and thundering stupidity, as he was pleased to call it.

"Pardon me, I had no right to ask," he said, after a moment's pause and without looking at her, "and I see I have touched upon a painful subject. I know what it is to lose a brother, for my own youngest brother died when I was quite a boy, but I have not forgotten him in the least, even now."

"I had one dearly loved brother once," Edith answered, steadying her voice and forcing herself to speak, for she was afraid he would think he had offended her, "and now he is lost to me, indeed. For nearly seven years I have heard nothing of him, and at this very moment I don't know whether he is alive or dead."

There was no mistaking the look of perfect sympathy which she saw in Harry Neville's face, when their eyes met for one moment, but he made no other reply. The tone in which her last words had been spoken, and which can only be described by the untranslatable French expression, *les larmes dans la voix*, warned him that she could bear no more just then.

They were only half-way up the Kreutzberg hill as yet, however, and it would not do to walk on altogether in silence.

So after a few minutes he ventured to make another observation on the subject they had been discussing before his unlucky interruption.

"You were speaking of Macaulay in connection with Carlyle just now," he said. "Do you think they have many points in common?"

She had quite recovered her composure by this time, and answered at once. "A few perhaps, though in many things they are so different. They are both men of deep thought and splendid genius, though I think Carlyle is the more original thinker of the two. Macaulay seems content to show how far his genius can raise him above others in the grand old beaten track of literature, while Carlyle appears disposed to make a fresh path for himself. Macaulay's writings always put me in mind of some perfect work of architecture; all his words and sentences fit exactly in their appointed places, like hewn and chiselled stones, while Carlyle's thoughts seem like the rough stones fresh from the quarry, lying about in magnificent confusion, and ready for the reader to take and build up what he will with. It has often struck me that one short chapter of Carlyle's furnishes one with food for hours of afterthought."

"A chapter of 'Sartor Resartus,' for instance," said Captain Neville; "what a wonderful book that is! Once let it be read through, and I defy even the most faulty memory to forget it altogether. Some parts of 'Past and Present,' too, bear traces of the highest talent, and what is better still, of true religious feeling, and a deep insight into the human heart. Do you remember that chapter on Work? I believe my copy of 'Past and Present' opens of its own accord at that place. How grand those words are, 'Work is of a religious nature, Work is of a brave nature, as it is the aim of all true religion to be.' And again, 'Blessed is he who has found his Work, let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life purpose. He has found it and will follow it.'"

"Noble words, indeed," said Edith, with a sigh; "but how few persons can say with any truth, that they have found their work in life. I have a fellow feeling for those whose best days are spent in the vain effort to find out the work which they would only too gladly do, if found."

"Nay, now you are inclined to misunderstand Carlyle's meaning," her companion replied, "and to exaggerate the importance of the externals of work, if I may use such an expression. You who are so brave in defending the cause of others must not be allowed to be over severe upon yourself. Our true work, after all, is not so difficult to be found: it generally lies spread out before us pretty clearly if we will but see it."

"Do you really think so," said Edith, shaking her head a little incredulously.

"I do indeed," he answered. "The work may be very different from what we might have chosen for ourselves; something very poor perhaps, or trifling, it may seem in the eyes of man. But only let it be done in the right spirit, and it is not for us to foresee or calculate the importance of its results. There is a little verse—Keble's is it not?—about,

"The common round, the trivial task,"

which bears upon the subject," he added rather shyly. "I dare say you know it?"

"Yes, quite well," Edith answered quietly.

"Carlyle, too," continued Harry, "himself reproves such over anxiety upon the subject. He has given us a golden rule by which to find out our proper work, when he quotes the old maxim, 'Do the duty nearest thee, and thy next duty will already have made itself clearer.' A moment after, he added more gaily, "You must forgive me for preaching so dry a sermon, and meanwhile neglecting my individual responsibilities. I see you find your present work of climbing this stiffish bit of hill rather a tax upon your strength. Let me 'do the duty nearest me' at this moment, by following the example of my companion in front, and offering you the help of my arm."

Edith laughed, and tried to pretend that she had no need of such assistance, but the next moment she happened to put her foot upon a loose stone and very nearly slipped. Almost before she was aware of it, she found her hand taken summary possession of, and placed within her companion's strong arm. After that, and with just a word of thanks, she availed herself of the welcome support without making any further resistance.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WELL, this *is* beautiful," exclaimed Kate, when at last they had reached the highest point of the hill on which the Kreutzberg is situated. "Worth all the heat and the dust, and the trouble we have taken to see it, that last piece of hill and all. Edith, Edith, come here and see this lovely view!"

She was standing a little apart from the others, who had seated themselves on the steps of the chapel, glad of a few moments' rest, after the steepness of the ascent. Edith rose, and joined her, and the two stood together for some moments in silent but deep admiration of the beautiful landscape which lay mapped out before them. Certainly it was a lovely scene that their eyes rested upon.

Beneath them was the broad stately Rhine, bathed in all the golden glory of the setting sun. They were too far off to see how the river was foaming and whirling past, as it rolled onward in its mad course towards the sea; seen from the height on which they stood, it looked calm and unruffled as any lake—peaceful as life itself *might* have appeared in the eyes of those stern old monks who lived there in the former times.

On the opposite shore rose the Seven Mountains, peak above peak, in picturesque confusion, the ruined castle of Drachenfels standing out amongst them in bold relief. To the right of the Kreutzberg, almost immediately below the spot where our travellers were standing, lay the quiet little village of Godesberg. A little further, the tower of Rolandseck was just visible between the hills, and opposite to this, in the centre of the river, floating as it were upon the very surface of the stream, was the toy island of Nonnenwerth. Beyond these again, and higher up the river, the eye could just trace the dim outline of the hills around Apollinarisburg, and those which skirt on either side the beautiful valley of the Aar. Over all and above all, the red light of the setting sun was shining. The western horizon was still radiant with its departing glory, though already the pale moon was to be seen by those who looked for her. It was a perfect exemplification of Byron's beautiful lines,—

"The moon is risen and yet it is not night,
Sunset divides the sky with her."

There were clouds about too, real clouds, enough to provoke a remark from Mr. Wentworth, that there would be rain before long; but these, like faithful followers, seemed bent upon reflecting the sun's brightness as long as they could. Golden and violet, crimson and light green, they shone forth, glowing with all the gorgeous colouring of the rainbow.

Presently Mr. Wentworth rose also, and came and stood behind the two girls. "Those reverend gentlemen knew what they were about when they came and pitched their monastic tent here, eh, Katie? I wonder if one could ever tire of looking on such a scene as this?"

"I suppose one could, Papa," Kate answered, retaining her father's hand where he had placed it on her shoulder. "I fancy one could learn almost to hate the very loveliest view in nature, if it were connected with bitter or painful remembrances; and I am sure, on the contrary, that the most unpicturesque places in the world may become endeared by home ties and pleasant associations. With all due deference to this beautiful country, and to Edith there, for her kindness in bringing me to see it, I have seen nothing yet that could induce me to change away our own dear little rectory at home, with the cosy garden and its one big tree, and the view of the dear Old Forest, stretching away over the hills in the distance." Miss Wentworth meant the 'New Forest,' though she called it the 'Old' by way of endearment.

"There is a good deal of truth in what you say, my dear, only in this as in all other things, we must not let our feelings run away with our judgment, or degenerate into prejudices. We must not think that what we like or admire most, is of necessity in itself the most admirable. I dare say, however, that more than one of the poor monks who used to live here, found out to his cost when it was too late, that the most lovely scenes in nature are not enough of themselves to satisfy the longings of a rational and intelligent being, when shut out from all those social pleasures which God has given us richly to enjoy."

"Yes! especially on fast days, or when the superior happened to be out of temper," suggested Edith.

"Superior people, especially superior clergy, are never supposed to be out of temper, Miss Edith," retorted Mr. Wentworth. "But what a grand mistake that monkery was," he added, after a minute's pause, more seriously, and almost as if speaking to himself, "and all springing from the one false idea, that in flying from the world's cares and duties they could escape from its temptations as well. No! the world we have to overcome is in our hearts, according to old Luther's theory, and while we live we shall never quite drive it out; though we must fight against it bravely, if we would be true to our baptismal engagements, and fight against it just the same, whether the battle be carried on amidst the pomps and pleasures of a crowded city or in the silence and solitude of a desert. For my part, I never was an admirer of the Simon Stylites sort of devotee, nor do I believe that worthy was one whit nearer to heaven, because he chose to live so far above the earth. But come, girls, I must not stand here preaching any longer. We have no time to lose if we wish to see the inside of this old church before it is dark."

The two other gentlemen joined them as they approached the entrance, and they all went into the building together.

There is not much worth seeing within the church itself; the principal object of attraction for visitors is to be found in the crypt, where the bodies of twenty-five monks have been preserved in a marvellous manner from decay, by some chance of atmosphere, or some trick of skill. Although they are, as the guide-book says, shrivelled up to the consistence of dried stockfish, the features of all are still traceable; they are in fact, says the infallible Murray, 'natural mummies.' Some of these monks died as early as the fifteenth century.

Our travellers were, however, contented with a very short visit to the crypt-like vaults, where the bodies of these monks are lying in cassock and gown, as on the first day of their interment. They were well pleased to return to the purer air above, being unanimous in the opinion that the sight of the said monks, though possibly curious, was decidedly unpleasant. The church also boasts of possessing a staircase of Italian marble, (presented to the monastery by the Elector Clemens Augustus, and built in imitation of the Scala Santa at Rome,) said to be the very staircase which led to the judgment seat of Pilate. This one at the Kreutzberg is broad and handsome; on some of the steps are still to be seen stains of blood, caused by the drops which fell from our Redeemer's wounded brow, when he was wearing the crown of thorns. So says tradition—and so the superstitious credulity of the pilgrims, who resort here principally during the season of Lent, leads them believe. The staircase is held by these in great reverence, and they only venture to ascend it on their knees.

Edith Vivian and Captain Neville found themselves still standing alone in front of this object of interest when the others of the party had passed on. They had both been silent for some moments.

"I wonder if you are thinking of the same thing as I am?" the latter said, or asked, presently.

"My thoughts had flown back some three hundred of years, to Rome and Martin Luther," she answered simply.

"Just so," he said; and then he added in a lower tone, "'The just shall live by faith' indeed. We want to travel in a Roman Catholic country, and to see with our own eyes instances of poor blind superstition like this, to find out how much we Protestants owe to the great reformer. What a poor mockery of religion it is, to let men believe that relics of the past, that even these drops of blood, supposing them to be genuine, could have any virtue or sanctifying power in themselves, apart from the one sacrifice with which they are connected. Papist pilgrims come and kneel down and worship mere stones such as these, and then the Roman Catholic priests tell you that their religion does not encourage idolatry."

"We were speaking of Carlyle, just now," he continued as they turned away to follow the others who had already left the church. "Do you recollect what he says of Luther in his 'Hero Worship'? 'No more valiant heart, no mortal heart to be called *braver*, that one has record of, ever lived in that Teutonic kindred whose name is valour.' And then, too, his description of that famous scene at the Wartburg, do you remember that?"

"Not quite, it is long since I read the book. I know I thought at the time his essay on Luther was especially beautiful, but I have forgotten the details a good deal now. Please tell me the part you mean."

"About the Wartburg? You know the anecdote, do you not? that when Luther was sitting in one of the rooms of the old castle, occupied with his translation of the Bible, worn down, as Carlyle says, 'by long labour, with sickness and abstinence from food, there rose before him a hideous indefinable image, which he took to be the Evil one, to forbid his work.' 'Luther started up with fiend defiance,'—I can't tell it you better than in Carlyle's own words,—'flung his inkstand at the spectre and it disappeared.

The spot still remains a curious monument of many things.' And then he adds, as if by way of application, 'Any apothecary's assistant can now tell us what we are to think of this apparition in a scientific sense, but the man's heart that dare rise defiant face to face against hell itself can give no higher proof of courage. The thing he will quail before exists not on this earth or under it.'"

"Beautiful, indeed!" exclaimed Edith, enthusiastically, "Carlyle describes the priest of his 'Hero Worship,' as a true hero."

"Yes, and a true hero he was in the highest sense of the term. A great man and a good. 'His words,' as Jean Paul says, 'are half battles,' and some of them have come down to us to this day, as precious memorials of the man. Certainly, 'Hero Worship' will be my form of idolatry if ever I take it into my head to depart from the Protestant faith," he added laughing.

"I am disposed to agree with you, there," said Edith, in the same tone. "I do believe there is nothing on God's earth more worthy of admiration, if not of adoration, than such a hero as you have described, a great and good man."

"Always excepting a good woman," said Cousin Harry, with a low bow.

"Oh, but you know we are all good, or said to be, except when we are very bad, and so I am afraid your exception doesn't stand," retorted Edith.

She was feeling wonderfully at home with her cousin, considering how short a time she had been in his company. There was something so easy and high bred in his manner, when once his natural shyness had worn off; something, too, so refreshing in the way in which more than once he had *dared*, in the course of conversation, to allude to those more serious subjects which we are too apt to avoid purposely as if we were ashamed to speak of them. Edith was wrong, though, if she fancied that Captain Neville was in the habit of talking in this way to every one he happened to meet. On the contrary, there must have been some peculiar fascination about herself which had induced him thus far to lay aside his usual reserve. Be this as it might, however, she found him a very agreeable companion, very different from most young men of her acquaintance, and to these good reasons for liking him, there was added another, better still, namely, that he had rendered her an important service that very morning which she was not likely to forget. And so, more than once in the course of the afternoon, Edith congratulated herself that she had belonging to her in this wide wide world, such a relation as her cousin Harry.

They rejoined the rest of the party, and after lingering a little longer to enjoy the singular beauty of the panorama which lay before them, they turned their steps homewards. That walk back was worth something in the cool evening, after all the scorching heat and glare of the sunshine had passed away. The sun was quite gone now, and the moon had it all her own way.

She was shining alone in her pale quiet beauty, except that those who watched closely could see that, one by one,

> "The sentinel stars set their watch in the sky."

The order of the procession was a little changed. Mr. Wentworth, with Edith and Captain Neville, walked on together, while Arthur Fitzgerald and Kate followed a few steps behind. In the former trio the conversation was kept up principally by the two gentlemen, Edith only joining in occasionally, when appealed to by one or the other. She was quite content to listen to two such intellectual and well-informed men conversing together on the topics of the day and the beauty of the country through which they were passing, and did not much care to hear the sound of her own voice. Mr. Wentworth was well pleased with his companion, and after they had parted that night, gave it as his opinion that Captain Neville was an agreeable and intelligent young man.

A pleasant party of six sat down to a substantial meal, consisting of tea and supper 'jointly,' that evening, in the *table d'hôte* room, for the two officers did not think it worth while, as they said, to be waited on at a separate table.

Edith made tea, in true English fashion, she being, as usual, far less tired than Kate. Mrs. Wentworth was much refreshed with her long day of rest, and added, in her quiet way, to the happiness and merriment of the little circle.

The room happened to be nearly empty at the time, and they stayed chatting together long after the real business of eating and drinking had come to an end; but at last it was considered time to separate, and they bade each other good night in a very friendly fashion, shaking hands all round.

"Well, Edie," exclaimed Kate, when those young ladies were established in their respective bedrooms, "I hope you enjoyed your walk, my dear. How you did talk to that Harry, as his friend calls him. Do tell me, what it was all about?"

"Literary matters principally," said Edith quietly, and then they went to bed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE next day was Sunday, and our travellers went to the English church. 'Going to church' when abroad for the first time is a new experience, and ought to be a very pleasant one. To me it has always seemed a peculiar privilege, when in a foreign country, to join the little band of worshippers (a *mixed* multitude indeed it is sometimes), who are thus gathered together 'with one accord, in one place;'—to hear the familiar words of our beautiful Liturgy, said and sung in our own English language, when we are far away from our English homes. The place of worship may be the hall of some public building, or a ridingschool of a palace, as at Wiesbaden, or a large 'upper room furnished,' or it may be a consecrated chapel, lent for our use by the kindness of some other Protestant church; but the place matters little, if only the hearts of those thus assembled be rightly attuned to the work in which they are engaged. And the simplest service of prayer and praise thus offered will be as surely accepted at the Throne of Grace as if it had been uttered beneath the vaulted roof of the most gorgeous cathedral, or chanted in strains of such exquisite sweetness as can only be surpassed by the melodies of Heaven. Then, too, we may remember that not only in our own churches in England, but from the midst of far-off heathen lands, from the scorching plains of India, of Africa, of Ceylon; from the islands of the Pacific; from amidst the snowy regions of North-West America; from the ends of the earth, and from those who are far off on the sea; wherever the English flag is floating, and the faithful 'two or three' are gathered together in His name, there, Sunday after Sunday, the same form of prayer, the same confession of sins, the same litany of supplication, the same general thanksgiving for mercies at once inestimable and undeserved, are addressed to Him who is the great Head of the universal Church. And such a thought reminds us of the happiness of that time when all the kingdoms of the earth shall have become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, when all the petty discords and divisions of the 'Church militant' shall have ceased, and the redeemed of God from out of many nations shall unite their voices to swell the anthems of the 'Church triumphant'; the time when there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

English Protestants at Bonn meet for public worship in the chapel of the University, once the palace of the Electors of Cologne. The service on the morning of which I speak was reverently and devoutly performed. The preacher was an eloquent man, and his sermon preached, upon the text, "Children, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God," a moderately good one. I say moderately good only, because, although a sincerely religious man himself, the arguments he made use of were in many respects illiberal and narrow-minded. He spoke of the danger of riches, as though there were no other dangers in the whole world to be dreaded; of the snares which beset the rich, as though the poor knew not what temptation meant. But his similes were brilliant, his language good throughout; and so the sermon, on the whole, was an effective one, and touched the hearts of his listeners. Poor Edith, who, as I have said before, was morbidly sensitive on the subject of her responsibilities, grew more and more sad as he proceeded; before he had ended, her eyes were full of tears. That stewardship of her riches was the one weight of her otherwise happy life. There came over her the old sad feeling of thinking it almost wrong to have so much money, wrong to spend any of it on herself or her own selfish pleasures. For a moment she even felt tempted to doubt if the present expensive pleasure of travelling might not be a selfish one; but one glance at Mrs. Wentworth's dear pale face, already the brighter for the two weeks of change, quite reassured her on this point.

And yet, in spite of the depressing influence of the sermon, Edith Vivian enjoyed the service thoroughly; she felt that it was something to be grateful for indeed, to be allowed the benefit of our own precious Church privileges when so far away from home; and it was with a full heart that, upon leaving the chapel, she dropped her golden thank-offering into the box placed at the door for the contributions of strangers; so simply and quietly withal, that none ever knew its value, save her who gave, and God to whom it was given.

Captain Neville and his friend joined the Wentworth party as they were strolling through the University gardens.

"How did you like the sermon?" Harry asked of Edith, when presently they found themselves walking side by side, an arrangement which pretty generally seemed to ensue.

"I thought it was a very fine one," she answered. She could not honestly say she liked it; but then she fancied the fault rested with herself, and not with the preacher. "Did not you?" she asked a moment after, for her cousin was rather pointedly silent.

"Not altogether; I cannot say I did," he replied.

"Did you not? Yet I am sure that clergyman must be a good and earnest man."

"Yes, so I should think, and his sermon, too, was well meant and well worded. And yet I cannot call it a good one."

"Why not? Do tell me why you did not like it?" asked Edith a little eagerly. She was really anxious to know his reasons. Perhaps they might throw some light on her own perplexed feelings.

"To my mind, it savoured of narrow-mindedness, arising from want of a proper knowledge of the world around him. The man argues as one who knows but little of mankind in general, and has taken a one-sided view of the subject he argues upon. He was too hard, I think, in his strictures upon rich people, to the exclusion of all other classes."

"Do tell me how you mean." And once more Edith listened very earnestly for his answer.

"He spoke of wealth, as of something to be looked upon as a sore trial, rather than a blessing, sent to us from God, and to be used for His glory. Whereas it is the abuse, and not the use of our lawful riches, which we are to be careful to avoid."

"And yet the text, our Saviour's own words," suggested Edith, timidly.

"Pardon me, I do not often quote Scripture, but if I remember rightly, we are told in the very same chapter that he afterwards added, as if to give the true explanation of his former words, 'Children, how hardly shall they that *trust* in riches enter into the kingdom of God.' Now, it is one thing to be rich, and quite another thing to trust in riches. The 'making haste to be rich,' the giving up of time, and thought, and intellect, the absorption of every faculty in the one great business of making money, which we unfortunately see in so many people, *that* seems to me to be the crying evil of the day, and I think our worthy friend this morning would have spoken to much better purpose if he touched more on this subject, and not done his best to make the mere accidental possession of riches appear so like a crime. But I agree with you in thinking him thoroughly in earnest; and after all, I blame him more for what he omitted to say, than for what he said."

"I suppose the longer we live," said Edith, "or rather the better we know our own hearts, the more we shall appreciate the wisdom of Agur's prayer, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.' Wealth is a great responsibility; there is no doubt of that," she added, with a sigh, which her companion did not hear.

"No doubt whatever," he replied, "but the mistake is in thinking it the only one. You may be sure, poverty has its own temptations, and fierce and strong these sometimes are. To my mind it has always seemed a cowardly device on the part of us poor people, to be for ever flinging the burden of responsibility upon the rich." (Edith could hardly help smiling to find how evidently he set her down in his own mind as being no richer than himself; thanks perhaps to her muslin dress, and most unpretending of white bonnets, she thought). "If you come to that," he continued, "everything is a responsibility, talent of all kinds—time, health, the very charms of voice and manner, which are in themselves means of influence over others—all these bear their own responsibility just as much as wealth. But, oh, it argues but a poor sort of courage, to refuse or undervalue God's gifts, whether of providence or of intellect, just out of a slavish fear for the account we shall hereafter have to render for their use. We might as well take Sidney Smith's words in a literal sense, 'Wit is dangerous, eloquence is dangerous, *everything* is dangerous that has efficacy or vigour for its characteristics; nothing is safe but mediocrity.'"

Harry Neville never quite understood the meaning of that bright, grateful look with which Edith's eyes were raised to meet his. He was doing her so much good. Those honest, generous words of his were opening her mind as it were to a whole new world of thought and ideas. He was making her see some things in a new light, as she had never seen them before; showing her simple straightforward truths, to which she had been foolishly blind till then. Doing her good indeed he was by those kind brave words, smoothing away the difficulties and plucking out the imaginary thorns which beset her path in life, just in the same way as he had taken a real thorn out of her hand years before, when she had been quite a little girl. The incident had made a deep impression on her at the time, and she had never forgotten it. It was on that one occasion when her cousin had come to Enderleigh, with his father, to her birthday party, when she was just nine years old. She had accidentally run a rose-thorn deeply into her finger, while playing with her young companions, and her dignity having been in some way grievously offended at the same time, she had gone away and hidden herself among the shrubberies, where she was found by Harry a few minutes afterwards, crying bitterly. He had first laughed at her, then pitied her, and, lastly, taken out the thorn which was hurting her cruelly, with as much skill as tenderness. And she, who had begun by stamping and screaming at him, had been so touched by his boyish kindness, that in spite of her pride and petulance she had owned herself 'very naughty' of her own free will, and when she lifted up her tear-stained face to thank him, had been not a little surprised at receiving a very affectionate kiss by way of forgiveness.

As I said before, she had never forgotten this little incident, and something in her cousin's manner reminded her of it more forcibly than ever now.

It was so pleasant to hear him talking in this strain, as though he was not ashamed to acknowledge that such things as duty and responsibility did exist. And he an officer too, one of a class whom Edith in her little narrow world had been often tempted to think frivolous and irreligious.

She had yet to learn how often in these days, the name of Christian may be added to the good old name of officer and gentleman; that in many instances the defenders of their country are known to be defenders of their faith also, men who rightly deem that their vow of allegiance to the sovereign is no hindrance to their earlier vows of dedication to their God; but who true to their baptismal engagements 'fight on manfully under His banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and continue His faithful *soldiers* and servants unto their lives' end.' I say again, our country can boast of many such *Christian* officers and gentlemen in these modern days, thank God.

Captain Neville went on presently as if following out the train of his own thoughts. "Of course there are many exceptions, but as a rule, I believe that among those who are born to riches, there is often far less of worldly mindedness and pride than in the classes below them, who have made their own money. For instance, I have a relation, a sort of cousin, living in Hampshire, who is very rich for a woman, and who being now an orphan, is entirely her own mistress. I don't know her myself, I have not even seen her since she was a child; but although I hear she can be proud enough to her equals, she is the next thing to adored by all her dependants. She lives in a simple unostentatious way herself, and seems quite wrapped up in her efforts to improve the condition of the people who live upon her estate, and indeed, of all the poor who come within the range of her influence. If I may believe my own father, who is, or rather was her guardian, the larger moiety of her income is devoted to charity or good purposes of some kind; at least so he supposes, for she makes no boast of her good deeds. Now I think you will agree with me, that one like her, who is rich by accident of birth, and uses her money well, can hardly be classed amongst the ranks of ordinary mammon-worshippers; or be considered to 'trust in riches' nearly so much as those who, being lower perhaps in the scale of society, look upon the accumulation of wealth as the one great end and object of their lives, and deem money the golden key which is to give them access to all possible honour and happiness. What do you say?"

But Edith did not just then feel inclined to say anything. The colour had mounted to her very temples, and she was feeling intensely annoyed and uncomfortable. Another word or two in the same strain, and she thought she should have disgraced herself by crying outright. Why *couldn't* he have left his Hampshire cousin and her money alone. Just too, when what he had before said had so touched her feelings and won her confidence, that she had been more than half inclined to impart to him the intelligence of their relationship. Now, however, he had quite sealed her lips for that day, if not for good. If he had once mentioned her name, she could not in truth have kept silence ; if he had chosen to speak of her in disparaging terms, it is as likely as not she would have taken up arms in her own defence, and told him who and what she was. But in the face of such almost unqualified commendation as he had been bestowing upon his unknown cousin, it was not in her nature to stand forward and say "I am the very person you have just been praising up to the skies." No ! he had effectually stopped all such confession by those last unfortunate words. But for all that she could not help feeling herself very guilty in her conduct towards him.

Oh, why had she concealed the truth at all? it would have been far better to have let him know it from the first. She had never intended to keep silent about it for so long, never dreamt of the chance of their parting company without telling him that she was his cousin, but now it was becoming every minute more difficult to make the confession. Besides she had no good excuse to offer for having kept him in ignorance for a single hour.

They were a little ahead of the rest of the party, and so there was no danger that any of the others could have overheard what had passed between her and Captain Neville. She had nothing to be afraid of but the reproaches of her own conscience; but as this faithful monitor kept telling her, as plainly as any conscience could, that she was playing a most untruthful and ungenerous part, she walked on silent and bewildered, like one in a dream, and feeling altogether as thoroughly uncomfortable as she had ever done in all her life.

Her companion could not help noticing her silence, for his last words had been a question which she had left unanswered. He looked at her with a little surprise, and very soon observed her heightened colour and distressed look; he naturally set both down in his own mind as resulting from the oppressive heat of the day.

"How careless I have been! I have been letting you walk too fast in this intolerable heat," he exclaimed with real distress. "The sun is actually scorching, and yet in talking I had forgotten all about it. Do take my arm; I am sure you are tired; or at least let me relieve you by carrying this. What have I been thinking of all this time?"

He laid his hand, as he spoke, upon her Prayer Book, which was a large one. By way of pleasing him she would have given it into his keeping, but just as he was about to take it, it slipped from her hand and fell open on the ground. And there, upon the fly-leaf, engraved in very distinct letters and staring her in the face, was her own name at full length—Edith Margaret Vivian.

Quick as lightning her little foot had closed the book, before he could have seen this, she hoped, and in another moment she had it safe again in her own keeping. She had no fancy to trust it in his hand now, when she remembered that any chance movement might bring the name to light once more.

But still she felt conscious that her tacit refusal to part with the book, must have made her look ungracious, if not rude. She stammered out a word or two of excuse, but could not trust herself to speak much, for this last *contretemps* had vexed her more than ever, and her tears were all but falling now.

Harry Neville looked sadly puzzled and penitent; either he must have said or done something very wrong, or else she must be a different and far more capricious person than he had taken her for at first. But he felt more bewildered than ever, when, upon reaching the hotel, after completing the rest of their walk in silence, Edith raised her tearful eyes to his with a timid, beseeching look, as if to ask forgiveness for some imaginary crime, and at the same time held out her hand very frankly, and said, "Good-bye, and thank you very much." Then, without waiting for the others to arrive, she ran quickly up stairs to the friendly shelter of her own room.

Once before, some-*one* some-*where* had given Harry Neville just such a look as she had given him then. But who, when, where, how many years ago, that he could not recollect. He only remembered that wherever it was, that look had haunted him for a long time afterwards, and so it would now he knew. And so it did. All through the hours of that Sunday afternoon, and a long way into the night that followed, he could not help thinking over and over again of how strangely her hand had trembled and her voice faltered when she said good-bye, and how beautiful those proud eyes had looked when they were so full of tears!

CHAPTER X.

Captain Neville and his friend saw no more of the Wentworth party that day until the evening. Mrs. Wentworth, having rather imprudently ventured to the afternoon service, felt afterwards much fatigued and exhausted by the oppressive heat, and therefore, it was unanimously agreed that under existing circumstances, a quiet dinner in their own room would be preferable to the noise and heat of the *table d'hôte* room.

But later in the evening, after sun-down, Mr. Wentworth, with Edith and Kate, strolled into the garden and took possession of one of the summer-houses overlooking the Rhine. Prince Rupert took up his position at his mistress's feet, and fixed his eyes very intently on the river which had been the scene of his yesterday morning's adventure. Perhaps he was thinking and trying to make out, philosophical dog that he was, of what his fault had been, and of how he might best provide against danger, and ensure success, should duty ever lead him into similar circumstances on a future occasion. Edith's thoughts, too, were on the past peril; and, with a feeling of tenderness she could not resist, her hand came with a loving touch upon the dog's shaggy head, and for once in a way she did him the unwonted honour of inviting him into her lap.

They were not left long in solitude. The two officers had been standing very near when they entered the arbour, and presently joined them.

An hour of pleasant chat followed, and before they parted it was agreed that if fine the next day they should all go together to Königswinter, and after making excursions to Nonnenwerth and the Drachenfels, return to Bonn at night, as there was little or no chance of Mrs. Wentworth being able to go with them. "That is to say, if this arrangement is agreeable to you," Mr. Wentworth said to Captain Neville; "I should have thought that young men like you would have been for getting over the ground faster."

"Nothing could suit me better," he replied; "I must stay here over to-morrow, as I expect a letter by the evening post which will decide my future movements."

"Well, then, so let it be, if fine," continued Mr. Wentworth. "What do you say, Miss Weatherwise?" he added, putting his hands on Kate's shoulder, as she stood before him; "will it be fine, or not?"

"I don't quite know, papa, what to say about it. The sky looks clear enough now, but did you see the dark bank of clouds in the horizon at sunset; see, they are there still, and there is lightning playing about them now and then. I don't think that promises very well for the weather to-morrow, but we must hope for the best."

All did hope for the best, and when the morning came it seemed as though their hopes were about to be fulfilled. A bright, sunshiny morning; the air soft and balmy as on any day in June; the birds singing their sweetest songs, and the flowers sending forth their richest fragrance. True, those who had seen how the eastern sky glowed fiery-red when the sun rose an hour or two before, might have distrusted the seeming promise of fair weather. There were storm-clouds to be seen above and around; and over the horizon to windward there still hung a dense, heavy mist, which might have been the effect of atmosphere or of smoke, but which the sun's rays had no power to disperse. But all these signs might pass away as the day advanced; and even weatherwise little Kate was either too doubtful of the issue, or else too kindly-disposed, to do even so much as shake her head, when at the breakfast-table the morning was pronounced to be lovely, and the weather the most favourable that could possibly be desired for their expedition. Another hour saw them all, with the exception of Mrs. Wentworth, settled on the deck of one of the Rhine Kölnischer Gesellschaft steamers *en route* for Königswinter.

"A better start this than yours of last Friday, eh, Fitz?" suggested Harry Neville.

"Now, no chaff, my good fellow, if you please," replied the gentleman addressed; but a moment afterwards he good-humouredly volunteered, for the young ladies' edification, a detailed description of all his misadventures on that previous occasion, which said description Edith had before heard, nearly word for word, on that night when she had so involuntarily played the eavesdropper. She was not sorry, however, to hear it thus repeated, as now she would have a fair excuse for laughing, if she should be reminded of his misfortunes at any future time during the day.

Presently Mr. Wentworth's voice interrupted the conversation. "Come here, girls, the view from this side is too fine to be missed."

They moved to the spot where he was standing, and then followed him to the head of the boat, fully sharing his enjoyment of the beautiful scene before them. I do not know if it is the case with all rivers, but to my mind it seems that the Rhine is seen to far greater advantage in ascending than in descending the stream. It is difficult to say whether this arises from any peculiarity in the windings of the river itself, or of the formation of the rocks and mountains on its banks, or merely because in descending one passes so much more rapidly along the stream, that the eye has hardly time to take in any peculiar point of beauty, before the position from which it was seen is completely changed. But, whatever may be the cause, I think all who have been much upon the Rhine will agree with me as to the truth of this assertion. In mountain scenery the effect is exactly reversed. When going down hill, and winding round the zigzag road (which is often cut out of the very rock itself) at a pace that is rapid enough, and yet not too fast, the beautiful combination of rock, wood, and water, spread out underneath and around you, are to be seen to much better advantage than during the slow and painful toil of the ascent; so at least it has always seemed to me.

Arrived at Königswinter, our party were assailed by the usual number of donkey-boys and boatmen clamorous in their vociferations to be allowed the honour of conveying them across the stream to Nonnenwerth, or up the so-called *mountain* of the Drachenfels.

Captain Neville, as the best German scholar of the party, speedily contrived to silence these men, and steered the somewhat bewildered Mr. Wentworth safely into the little 'Hôtel de Berlin,' lying close to the landing-place, which was to be their head-quarters for the day. A general council was then held, and, after due deliberation, two favoured individuals were selected from amongst the anxious crowd without, (to the immense disgust of the rest), the one to row them over to the Island of Nonnenwerth, and the other to be waiting with a proper number of Jerusalem ponies for the ladies and Mr. Wentworth, to take them to the summit of the Drachenfels on their return. The younger gentlemen preferred walking, which did not surprise Edith, after what she had heard about Fitzgerald's last donkey-ride. It only remained for them to order dinner (by no means so unimportant in the day's arrangements when travelling, fair and romantic reader, whatever you may be inclined to think), which was accordingly done for some late hour in the afternoon, when it was supposed that the sight-seeing business of the day would be over; and then they started, a merry party of six, including, of course, Prince Rupert, the dog.

An hour of pleasant rowing, towing, and manœuvring against the transparent but rapid stream, and then the little boat grated and glided in amongst the reeds and rushes which fringe the banks of the little island of Nonnenwerth. Fitzgerald, in his good-nature and over-eagerness to be useful, sprang on shore before he should have done so, thereby getting his feet thoroughly soaked in the long damp grass; and receiving an angry reprimand from his companion for having run the risk of upsetting the boat. The more prudent Harry bided his time patiently till the boat was safely moored, and then, while Arthur Fitzgerald was engaged in the mortifying process of stamping the mud off his boots, had the pleasure of receiving the ladies *almost* in his arms, as he lifted them on to *terra firma.* They were disappointed in their hope of being able to enter the Nunnery,* and were obliged to content themselves with wandering about the pretty island, and seeing as much as they could outside the precincts.

"What have you to say about nunneries, papa?" asked Kate, as they were strolling side by side. "You were inveighing bitterly against monkery, as you were pleased to call it, the other night; do you think better of it in the feminine gender?"

---

* The little inn of past years has been lately restored into a convent.

"Worse, a thousand times worse, Katie. If men with their high intellectual capacities and strength of mind (here he made a comical sort of face at her), are unable to bear the monotony of such an unnatural existence,—and I don't believe there's one in a thousand could go through the ordeal without being the worse for it in mind or temper after a time,—just think what it would be with a parcel of silly women."

"Hush, papa, hush; I will not have you talk so."

"But I will not hush, and I will talk so, Miss Kate," was the laughing reply. "You have put the question to me, and now you must hear my answer. If you will take the trouble to call to mind sundry scenes which doubtless took place when you were a parlour-boarder at Mrs. Mordaunt's, or will endeavour to conceive what sort of a life only *three* cross old maids would lead if they lived together in a country village; even then you will form but a faint idea of what the lives of a *hundred* and *three* old and young maids must be, who are packed together for life in a little island without the least regard having been paid in the packing to the suitability of temper or character, and with nothing to do; no scandal, no gossip, not even a frock to turn, or a bonnet to trim. One might reverse Moore's words in this case,—

> "Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
> And multiply each by a thousand years;
> One moment of heaven is worth them all."

And say,

> "Take all the squabbles of all the schools,
> And reckon the nuns as a parcel of fools;
> One moment—"

But Kate's hand over his lips prevented the line from being ever finished.

"I will not hear it, papa, you really are too bad. But, now, do be sensible for once, and tell me, if you were compelled to choose between us, which of the two would you say would be best suited for a conventual life, Edith or I?"

"Edith, all the world over," exclaimed Mr. Wentworth laughing; "she's more sensible, and doesn't talk so fast."

Poor little Kate shrugged her shoulders and made what the French call '*la petite moue*.' "I see I am to have the worst of it," she muttered, "so I think I had better hold my tongue," and then for the space of about five seconds and a half she relapsed into profound silence.

"And leave others to take up the cudgels in your behalf," exclaimed Harry Neville compassionately. "Really, Sir, I do think you are too hard upon the ladies," he added, addressing Mr. Wentworth. "They often seem to me to bear a life of *ennui* and inaction far better than we do."

"If you mean that they will submit to be idle with a better grace, there I entirely agree with you," returned that gentleman.

"Not exactly that either," said Harry,

laughing. "I will not say that a woman bears a broken leg better than a man, but in cases of trifling illness, or in other small disagreeables of life, ladies set us a good example I fancy; for instance, which would you rather nurse through an influenza, Miss Kate," he asked, turning to her with a sly smile, "papa or mamma?"

"Oh, mamma, all the world over," exclaimed that young lady with malicious delight, mimicking her father's manner of a few moments before. "She's much more patient, and doesn't make half so much fuss about a mustard poultice."

And so the laugh was turned on Mr. Wentworth, who declared Kate to be an undutiful and impertinent child.

"In your strictures upon a conventual life in general do you mean to include everything that may come under the denomination?" asked Captain Neville of Mr. Wentworth, after a short silence. "All so-called Protestant sisters of mercy for instance, and those other 'Anglican' establishments, which always seem to me about half-way on the road to Roman convents."

The question was put seriously enough this time, and the answer was given in the same tone. "I should not have spoken of these unless you had named them," Mr. Wentworth replied; "but, as you have asked my opinion, I must tell you that I believe such establishments to be a grand mistake."*

"But the Sisters of Charity do a great deal of good, do they not, papa?" asked Kate.

"Yes, Katie, but the mistake is in thinking that the good can't be done without cropping the hair and wearing a long black frock. Every woman may be a sister of charity, if she will, in her own home and family circle, or even in her own neighbourhood, going about like a good Samaritan, pouring in the oil and wine of sympathy and encouragement, if nothing else, into the hearts of those wounded ones whom she may meet with in her way through the world. How narrow or how wide may be the sphere of her labours must depend in general upon force of circumstance and individuality of character. Singularity for conscience' sake is much to be commended, but singularity for its own sake just as much to be condemned; nothing tends more to encourage the pride of the natural heart. Not but what I believe," he added, as if correcting himself for too stern a judgment, "that many a woman enters these establishments from the purest and highest motives; but when one thinks how many a second and less worthy motive might influence a person in an evil moment to determine upon such a life, jealousy, disappointment of heart or life, morbid weariness of a world we were meant to live in, family quarrels, etc., I am afraid *all* the vows of self-dedication would not bear very close inspection. And then when the awakening time comes, and the first master motive has been supplanted by a fresh craving for excitement, think how more and more distasteful such a life of monotony and seclusion would become. Depend upon it, Sydney Smith was right when he said, that the great evil of such institutions was that people could not change their residence when they had changed their minds!"

---

* The Deaconesses' Institution was not well known in England in those days, or Mr. Wentworth might perhaps have made an exception in its favour.

"But in some of these establishments the sisters are free to leave and return to their own homes whenever they will, are they not?" asked Edith.

"I believe they are, my dear, each has its own rules and regulations, and I am not well up in any of them, not having studied the question; but granted that they can leave at will, I think there would be something half sad, half ludicrous in seeing a woman come down from the high pedestal on which she has voluntarily placed herself, and mixing again, as an ordinary mortal, in all the cares and avocations of the world. I am not going to condemn Luther for marrying a nun; on the contrary, I think he and his King Kate, as he called her, showed an immense deal of moral courage, and did the best thing they could, not only for themselves but for the world in general, when they did marry, but theirs was an exceptional case."

"And yet, papa, they broke their vows," suggested Kate softly.

"So they did, Katie, and a horribly wicked thing it would have been to do under ordinary circumstances; but I repeat, theirs was an exceptional case. They broke boldly through the chains of error and superstition which had enslaved Christendom for centuries, and cast off openly an unbearable yoke, which hundreds of others had cast off in secret. And I believe that over such broken vows as theirs the Great Master himself would have said, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' But we live in different times, and their case should only serve as a warning to people of the present age, against making any vows, except those which the Church makes for us. Any woman who enters on a conventual life in these days does it with her eyes open to all future and possible contingencies, and such an one cannot draw back without throwing some shade of discredit upon the principles by which she professed to have been actuated in her former choice. It would be as though she had made trial both of the world and of religion, and had found the world the best after all. And yet such a withdrawal would need some moral courage, too, and would be better than to live on in a life of hypocrisy, and pretend a self-devotion one did not really feel."

"I do not think there was much hypocrisy about those fat nuns we saw in the Béguinage at Ghent the other day, though," said Edith, "and yet they looked very happy."

"So they did, Edith," replied Mr. Wentworth, "and I should say that Béguinage was about as favourable a specimen of such an establishment for women as any to be found in Europe; but, then, we must rememmember that a great part, perhaps the greater part of the Béguines, belong to the middle and less highly educated classes of society, and so perhaps do not feel so much their social disadvantages. Also that they have plenty to do, and are free to come and go, at certain intervals, if they will. And yet, even there, I doubt not but those who could look below the surface would find many a heart-burning, and secret jealousy and discontent, where all seemed so happy and peaceful. Not but what jealousy and grumbling are to be met with unfortunately all over the world, and not in a Béguinage only."

"It is very unkind of you to run down those respectable nuns and nunneries so unmercifully," exclaimed Edith laughing. "You don't know what a nice little plan of mine you have been upsetting. What would you say now if the Priory were some day to be restored to its ancient use, and you were to see me ending my days as lady superior to some Protestant sisterhood of mercy there established? I have had such ideas before now."

"Say!" exclaimed Mr. Wentworth eagerly, and looking at her quickly, to see if she were speaking in joke or not, "that you had better not ask my consent, young lady, to such a mad scheme. I was but joking in what I said to Kate just now. Seriously, of the two, I would rather see my little Katie enter upon such a career than yourself, for I believe there would be a greater possibility of her being happy in it than you, with your high and somewhat romantic notions, and, excuse me, my dear, your morbid sensitiveness and self-tormenting propensities. Why, of all the people in the world whom I should pronounce unsuited to live in a convent, I know of no one more so than Miss Edith Vivian!"

Edith started and winced painfully; then she looked up at her companion with an imploring look which he was puzzled to understand. It certainly was a strange coincidence that just then the two younger gentlemen were busily engaged in a chase after an unfortunate water rat, or a darting kingfisher, or some other such half-amphibious bird or beast which Rupert had unearthed. She had seen this before she had ventured to make mention of the Priory, but she had not been prepared for Mr. Wentworth calling out her name in such a very energetic tone directly afterwards. Harry Neville was beyond ear-shot, however, and so Miss Vivian's 'cold shiver' might have been spared; but none the less did the accidental allusion remind her of what dangerous ground she was treading, and that, at any moment, a chance word might reveal their relationship to her cousin. The thought made her walk on in silence for a little while, and then she abruptly changed the subject of their conversation, or rather began again at a point which had before been half-discussed.

"There is one phase of the subject you seem to have forgotten, Mr. Wentworth," she said; "I can easily understand the feeling which might prompt some persons to become sisters of charity, with the hope of being able to take their part in 'the works and labours of love,' which might otherwise be forbidden ground to them. It is very difficult for ladies who live in large towns to take up district visiting, and other good works of the same kind, is it not? At least, so I have been told by those who would gladly have done such work if they had but found it practicable."

"Undoubtedly it is more difficult than for those who live in quiet villages like our own, where poor and rich are known to each other often from childhood, but I believe that in this, as in all other cases, 'Where there is the honest will there is generally the way,' and if not at one time of life then at another; and as I said before, every woman may play the part of a good Samaritan in her own family circle if debarred from a wider sphere of action. And I know this, that if I were ill, or suffering either in mind or body, I would rather have you or Katie to come and look after me, with your bright faces, and I don't mind saying it, your spice of gossip from the outer world, than all the black-frocked sisters of mercy in the universe. There, Edith, you see I can be complimentary for once in a way. But ladies, even in London, are beginning to find out that they lose nothing in the social scale, and get but little harm, by association with their poorer brethren, when this is done in the spirit of love and Christian charity, and the poor themselves are by no means slow to welcome those who come to them in such a spirit, though they are ready enough to resent mere impertinent intrusion. I believe, too, that there is such a genuine and innate feeling of politeness amongst even rough Englishmen, that a lady might sometimes venture fearlessly where even a missionary or a clergyman might run the risk of meeting with abuse. Depend upon it there are far more refined feelings among the poor than we are often willing to give them credit for."

"Oh, papa, I know that well enough," said Katie, softly, and with glistening eyes. "Don't you remember that poor old Mrs. Goodwin, who was such a favourite of ours, and who died last winter? Once, when I was writing a letter for her to her son in London, who hadn't been near her for years, though she was so ill, and wanted him so to come and see her once more before she died, she wouldn't let me say a word to him about her being so poor, and hardly able to get enough to live upon, for fear, as she said, 'he should think she wanted to see him for anything he could give,'—poor old thing."

"Yes, my Katie, and there are many such, you may be sure, who would feel as she did, but might not say it quite so clearly; but she was what we call London born in our part of the world, and Londoners are quicker and better able to express their feelings than we simple country folks. I heard a Sunday school teacher say once, and I believe he was right, that London children learn everything, wickedness included, much quicker than country ones; so you see there is something to be said for sharpness on the one hand and stupidity on the other. But, bless me!" he added, suddenly, looking at his watch, "what are those young men thinking of? it only wants five minutes to the time we told the donkey-boys to be waiting on the other side, and unless we look about us and make haste, what with the going up the hill and coming down again, and the dinner to follow, it's a dull evening poor mamma will be spending at Bonn to-night, I'm thinking, as that Irish gentleman would say."

A low whistle soon brought the truants back to his side, and in five minutes more they were all reseated in the little Rosenkranz skimming over the green rippling water, on their way back to the mainland.

CHAPTER XI.

Does the reader know the Drachenfels? If so, I will not ask him to come with me step by step along the narrow ill-paved back streets of the village of Königswinter, or through the vineyards beyond, if those rows of stunted vine bushes, planted on either hand, can by the veriest courtesy be so called; or even along the narrower and steeper road up the mountain, where the pathway, overhung by the frowning Löwenberg, has been blasted out of the solid rock to form a shorter ascent to the summit.

Edith and her companions met with no adventures worth mentioning, as they slowly wended their way up the mountain path. The former mounted on a pretty pony, which Harry Neville had managed to secure for her use, and with her cloak resigned into his keeping, looked in her close-fitting travelling dress and hat a very fair specimen of an equestrian. She was a first-rate horsewoman, as I have said before, and knew quite well what she was about even on a steep hillside; and so, for Harry, when he had lifted her into her most marvellously-shaped saddle, to walk on at her side, with his hand upon the bridle, "for fear," as he said, "of the pony making a false step," was no less than a work of supererogation. Edith did not seem to see it in this light, however, and the two chatted together pleasantly enough, on every-day topics, untill they reached the little resting place at the summit, where the rest of the party had arrived before them. Then ensued the usual remarks upon the beauty of the view, and the unexpected shortness of the distance. It was hardly worth while to have ridden at all, as Kate remarked; but Edith had her own opinions on this matter, and certainly Mr. Wentworth had his.

Beautiful indeed was the panorama on which their eye rested, but not so different from what they had seen from the Kreutzberg a night or two before, as to need a second description, though the sharp bend which the river makes just beyond Nonnenwerth being clearly visible from this point of the Drachenfels, a few new features of the landscape were brought into view. But the Rhine was not looking its best just then, neither did the surrounding scenery appear to anything like such advantage as in the glowing sunset of that previous Saturday evening. The clouds which had looked so ominous upon the eastern horizon at sunrise, had never disappeared. All this time they had been slowly rising nearer and nearer, growing denser, too as they rose. One or two of the party who had been sitting with their faces to the east, as they rowed back from Nonnenwerth had seen them then, but had kept silence on the subject, indulging perhaps in the illusory hope, which on such occasions never forsakes one till the last, that they might blow over. But it was useless to think so longer now. Already the river in the distance was enveloped in a thick mist, and the mountains around Apollinarisburg were hidden from view amidst the falling rain. Another minute or two, and the sun disappeared behind a dark mass of cloud detached from the still denser ones which followed, and to which it played the part of *avant-courrier*.

"I tell you what it is, ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Wentworth, suddenly becoming aware of all these little circumstances. "I don't like the look of things in the 'skyentific' world at all. As soon as ever you have seen enough of the view, I vote that we begin to make the best of our way down the hill again, and get housed before the rain is upon us, for, if I mistake not, we shall have a sharp storm before long."

"What do you say to taking shelter in this little Gasthof, as they call it, till it is over?" asked Captain Neville.

Mr. Wentworth shook his head. "I think not; better make haste to get under good shelter, for when it once begins it won't leave off again in a hurry, I fancy. If we start at once we shall just manage it, perhaps."

But he was wrong. They did start at once, that is, as soon as the ladies were once more in the saddles, from which they had dismounted for a few minutes, but it was too late. Before they were half-way down the mountain the first rain drops fell, large and heavy,

> "Like the first drops of a thunder shower."

Then came a blinding flash of lightning, followed by a loud peal of thunder. Shelter there was none to be had; but Edith's waterproof cloak was wrapped around her with a good deal of care, and mushroom hats were not such very bad substitutes for umbrellas, as far as the ladies were concerned. Fortunately they had passed that part of the road near the Löwenberg, where the path is rather narrow, and the mountain side really precipitous, the only part where there was any chance of an accident occurring, and so they got over the ground pretty fast. When a little farther on, the two walking gentlemen came across some unappropriated ponies on which they laid violent hands, the whole party clattered at a very good pace over the hard stone road, through the vineyards, and through the still harder streets of the village, up to the little Hôtel de Berlin, without having sustained any serious damage. Only just in time though; for, as they dismounted, the lightning flashed out again and was followed by another peal of thunder, quicker, louder even than the first, and then the rain began to fall in a drenching deluge.

"I am glad I have you safe, girls," exclaimed Mr. Wentworth as they ran past him into the house; "I wonder if poor Mamma is thinking of us at Bonn."

He had been right in saying "that when the storm came it would last." For many hours that drenching rain continued to fall, and the lightning blazed, and the thunder rolled and cracked till the little hostelry shook and rattled to its very foundations: still there was no sign of its giving over, not the least break to be seen in the leaden sky above and around. It grew quite dark, too; so much so that Kate laughingly suggested "having lights for dinner," or, as she said, "it would be more difficult than ever to find out what the German messes were made of;" but her proposal was not carried out.

It was by no means a dull party of five that was shut up inside the *table d'hôte* of the little hotel that afternoon, while the elements were fighting it out outside. They had the room all to themselves, which was an advantage, as they were all in spirits and disposed to be good company for each other. There was no particular reason they should not be, for they had seen all they had come to see before the storm began, so it had caused them no particular annoyance; in fact, the scamper home in the rain had been rather a pleasant excitement than otherwise. But even if it had been different, and their whole plans had been upset by the change of weather, I believe that they were all too good travellers (shall I say too good Christians? it would be nearer what I mean), to suffer the disappointment to have much effect upon their spirits or tempers. That two young and pretty girls, and three intelligent and agreeable men, should be able to amuse themselves together for a few short hours on a wet afternoon was perhaps not very surprising. As Mark Tapley would have said, "there was no particular credit in being jolly under such circumstances;" but even Mr. Wentworth, who might have had an excuse for feeling dull in his wife's absence, remembered that afternoon for a long time after as one of the pleasantest of many pleasant ones which he spent during his month's holiday.

It was not wonderful, therefore, that the hours thus spent passed quickly enough; but when dinner was over, and the storm without still continued to rage as fiercely as ever, it became rather a serious question what was to become of them. Get back to Bonn that night they must, and if possible, before it was dark, but to make their way to the head of that shaky little pier, though it was quite close to the hotel, in such blinding rain and heavy thunder, seemed rather a mad proceeding. Still there was no help for it, it was the only thing to be done, the only possible way of getting on board the steamer which was to take them across, unless, indeed, they chose to trust themselves in a rowing boat, which would have been madder still. It must get better in time however, they thought, and encouraged by this hope they waited and waited, until a later hour than they had at first intended. At last it seemed that their patience would be rewarded. There came a gleam of light across the leaden sky; it looked a little brighter certainly; the rain still fell, but not in such a deluge as before. And, as good luck would have it, just at that moment the bell was heard upon the pier, which announced that the down steamer was in sight.

"Now is our time young ladies, or never to-night," exclaimed Mr. Wentworth.

They were quite ready, and so no time time was lost in preparation. Another minute, and they had started in quest of the boat which they believed in, but could not see, accompanied by a porter and an old umbrella, the only one the little hotel could boast of. Fortunately Captain Neville had his own, which he had left there in the morning, and this was now held over Miss Vivian's head. When they were about half-way down the pier, she stopped suddenly.

"Rupert! Rupert! where is my dog?" she exclaimed in a very vexed tone; but what between the noise of the wind, which was blowing rather hard now, and the discomfort of fighting their way through the driving rain, no one heard her exclamation but the gentleman who was walking at her side. They both stopped and called again, but Rupert was neither to be seen nor heard.

"He was asleep at my feet during dinner," said Edith in a disconsolate tone, "and I suppose he did not move when we came away. How very provoking! I never knew him so stupid before."

"Will you hold this umbrella, if you can?" Harry said quietly, "and I will run back and see after him."

"Indeed I am very, very sorry to give you so much trouble; I know it was silly of me to bring him to-day, but he begged so hard."

By this time Harry had transferred the umbrella into her keeping, and waited to hear no more. "You had better go on board with the others, and I will follow in a moment," he called out, as he ran fast back to the hotel. But she did not obey his advice, for he had hardly left her, and was certainly not out of sight, when the Prince trotted composedly up to Edith, not from the hotel, as she expected, but from the other end of the pier, where he had been standing all the while. He had only waited to see the first detachment safe on board, and then came to his mistress as if to warn her that it was quite time for her to follow also.

Through all the noise of the warring elements, Harry Neville heard Edith's clear voice calling to him to come back, and Rupert's bark at the same moment told him the reason why.

She waited for him then; it would have seemed so churlish and ungrateful to have gone on alone, when he had only been detained on her account.

"Indeed I beg your pardon," she said, as he rejoined her; "I am quite ashamed to have given you so much trouble for nothing." But she stopped short, for Harry's eyes, in answer, told her rather plainly that he did not find anything a particular trouble, which was to be done on her account. "Oh, Rupert," she added, addressing the shaggy culprit, half in self-defence; "you naughty tiresome dog, you have almost made me lose the boat."

More than *almost*. The bell rang out again with a warning peal, and they hurried on as fast as they could, driven back as they were by the fierce wind and blinding rain, which was falling again more relentlessly than ever. But they were still ten good yards from the boat, when they heard an ominous sound, something between a snort and a puff, then a heavy plank was drawn back, and the next minute the frail wooden erection on which they were standing was shaken to its very foundations, as the Cologne Company's steamer 'Psyche' scraped against it in passing, before she steamed away into the middle of the river on her way down the Rhine to Rotterdam.

"I never felt so vexed in my whole life at being such a bad linguist," Kate said afterwards, almost with tears in her eyes. "All the German we three poor things could muster between us could not make that *stupid* Captain understand that there were more people coming and that he *must* wait.

And so, between seven and eight o'clock, one August evening, in the middle of a violent thunderstorm, Edith Vivian, to her extreme distress and surprise, found herself left standing face to face with her cousin Harry, upon the little pier of Königswinter.

END OF VOL. I.

PRINTED BY TAYLOR AND CO.,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.